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ALLIANCE #1

RIVERCLAN

Leader; Birchstar - light brown tabby tolly with a paler underbelly
Apprentice, Spikepaw

Deputy; Sloefur - thick-furred black she-cat with torn ears
Apprentice, Dawnpaw

Medicine Cat; Icewhisker - silver-gray tom with a sleek pelt

Warriors
Foxclaw - russet-colored tabby tom
Rippleheart - silver gray-blue she-cat with small paws and a scarred muzzle
Creeknose - brown tom with pale icy blue eyes
Harethroat - dark ginger-and-brown tom with large paws and long hooked claws
Frostfoot - dark brown tabby -near black- she-cat with snow white paws and tail
Shellskip - white tom
Apprentice, Reedpaw
Mintface - black she-cat with round amber eyes
Apprentice, Beepaw
Rainwhisker - handsome pure snow white tom with icy blue eyes, and amazing battle skills
Apprentice, Applepaw
Shimmerpelt - pretty blue siamese she-cat with amber eyes
Leafsplash - agile speckled brown she-cat with white paws and a flash of white on her chest
Silverfern - silver tom with massive paws
Apprentice, Birdpaw
Mudbelly - sleek, pale ginger tabby tom with dark tabby splotches and a scarred shoulder
Sandstripe - beautiful sandy gray tabby she-cat with swirling stripes
Apprentice, Icepaw
Fogtail - long, tall brown tom with a narrowed face and white tail

Eeltail - sleek dark furred tolly; blue eyes
Perchwing - plump, dark blue-gray, almost black, spotted tabby
Honeytail - golden brown she-cat with a white tail and paws
Sagefoot - round, seal-point she-cat with pale paws
Petalfoot - a young pale tan she-cat with on white paws
Darkshadow - black she-cat with blueish-green eyes and a big mane of fur around her neck
Milkfur - a fluffy white she-cat with a scar on her nose and thin silver tabby stripes; amber eyes

Apprentices
Beepaw - dark brown tabby tom with near-black stripes and amber eyes
Reedpaw - pretty, long-furred dark ginger tabby she-cat with gorgeous blue eyes
Spikepaw - muscular dark gray tom with dark green eyes and big fore-paws
Applepaw - broad-shouldered, sandy-brown fur tom and pale green eyes and a short-tail
Icepaw - pale white tom with golden eyes
Dawnpaw - a silver she-cat with a tint of blue in her fur and hazel eyes
Birdpaw - black she-cat with white markings

Queens
Russetstorm - tan brown she-cat with a fluffy tail (perm. queen)
Ebonystream - dark black tabby she-cat with white hind-legs (expecting Fogtail's kits)

Elders
Shadeeyes - battle-scarred dark tom with golden eyes
Mossywhisker - fluffy gray-and-white patched she-cat with long whiskers
Sunstorm - golden tabby she-cat retired due to failing eyesight
Kestrelsplash - dark furred she-cat with pink eyes

THUNDERCLAN

Leader; Redstar - muscular dark ginger tom with yellow eyes
Apprentice, Birchpaw

Deputy; Seedpelt - gray she-cat with darker flecks

Medicine Cat; Kestrelwing - dark brown tabby tom

Warriors
Wildflight - large white she-cat with dark ginger tabby patches
Nettleclaw - gray tabby tom with darker gray stripes
Dustcloud - pale gray she-cat
Apprentice, Shadepaw
Bloomheart - speckled gray tom
Apprentice, Maplepaw
Mistpelt - thick-furred pale gray she-cat with green eyes
Oakfur - A broad-shouldered, glossy-furred, sturdy reddish-brown tom
Apprentice, Stormpaw
Fennelsplash - wiry cream tom
Ashspots - smokey gray she-cat with darker gray specks
Thrushtalon - sandy brown tom
Sweetbriar - light brown tabby she-cat with white paws and green eyes
Fallowsong - light brown she-cat
Apprentice, Frecklepaw
Deerdapple - silver-and-black tabby she-cat
Rabbitfur - gray tabby tom
Rainspeckle - gray speckled she-cat with a blue tint to her fur

Apprentices
Shadepaw - handsome black tom
Stormpaw - tall, long limbed dark she-cat with golden eyes
Maplepaw - thick-furred calico she-cat with a long white tail and amber eyes
Frecklepaw - speckled, golden-brown she-cat with dark amber eyes
Birchpaw - dark brown almost black tabby tom; dark blue eyes

Elders
Starlingwing - dark brown she-cat with emerald eyes
Antstrike - white she-cat with black stripes
Amberclaw - long-legged ginger tom

SHADOWCLAN

Leader; Dawnstar - creamy brown she-cat

Deputy; Snaketail - brown tabby tom with a long black tail

Medicine Cat; Molepelt - scrawny black tom

Warriors
Roseclaw - cream she-cat
Crowmask - dark gray almost black tom
Apprentice, Robinpaw
Flashtuft - dark gray tom
Apprentice, Cardinalpaw
Goldswipe - large golden tom with unusually long claws
Sedgetooth - cream patched she-cat with huge paws
Frostbelly - black-and-white tom
Blackwhisker - dark furred she-cat
Speckledstrike - long-legged sleek speckled brown she-cat
Finchpuddle - muscular brown-and-white tom
Boulderstrike - white tom with dark blue eyes and a gray tail
Slatestripe - dark brown she-cat with a long, dark stripe going down her back
Silentstalk - pale gray-and-white tom
Blackflame - dark black tabby tom

Apprentices
Cardinalpaw - reddish-brown tom with one white paw
Robinpaw - reddish-brown she-cat

Queens
Ripplesong - dark black she-cat

Elders
Roseflight - deep red tabby she-cat with icy eyes

Kits
Nightkit - night-black tom
Toadkit - black-and-white tom

WINDCLAN

Leader; Swiftstar - dark gray tabby

Apprentice, Silverpaw

Deputy; Milkfur - creamy white tom
Apprentice, Dewpaw

Medicine Cat; Larkwing - silver-and-black tabby she-cat

Warriors
Fogstripe - white she-cat with gray stripes and pale eyes
Apprentice, Cedarpaw
Beechbriar - golden tom
Cinderfur - pure white tom
Apprentice, Goldenpaw
Hareflight - light brown she-cat
Stagleap - handsome long-legged, brown tom
Heatherstep - a small, pale pinkish-gray she-cat with blue eyes, and a sleek, thick pelt.
Apprentice, Patchpaw
Amberpelt - reddish brown she-cat with violet eyes
Whisperwing - silver she-cat
Sweetbreeze - brown-and-white patched she-cat
Swiftflight - pale gray tabby tom
Midgepelt - patchy-furred brown tom

Apprentices
Goldenpaw - golden-brown she-cat
Cedarpaw - black tom
Patchpaw - black-and-white patchy she-cat with golden eyes
Silverpaw - beautiful silver tabby she-cat
Dewpaw - dark gray she-cat

Queens
Rosethroat - dark ginger she-cat with a white neck (expecting Beechbriar's kits)

Elders
Smokewhisker - smoky black she-cat
Rabbitthroat - agile speckled brown tom
Jumpshine - speckled ginger she-cat with a dead eye

CATS OUTSIDE CLANS

Lynx - round, dark brown tom with cloudy blind eyes and a blue collar
Sonic - fast-footed, blue-gray tom with a cream underbelly and round green eyes

Prologue

The pale brown tom fell to the ground, blood pooled underneath him, as well as him choking on the scarlet liquid.
His vision became blurry as he saw the calico she-cat, *Mapleshade,* flash away from him. Stumbling on her paws, blood rushing down her throat and muzzle, and onto the grass.

Surely staining it a sickly scarlet red.

Appledusk tried to scramble back to his paws but fell back down with a thud. Mapleshade turned around and looked at Appledusk, sympathy and fear clouded her gaze but soon her eyes flashed with hatred as Perchpaw yowled something at her. His tail lashing.

Perchpaw, his apprentice that he had been training for almost a whole season, stood in front of him. His claws were unsheathed, as he yowled something after the rouge she-cat.

His tail still lashing from side to side. Through tired eyes he noticed blood splattered on his muzzle and paws. Was he the one who attacked?

Reedshine was looking down at him, nudging him and letting out mute wails, before the pretty expecting queen looked over and yowled at Perchpaw.
'Probably warning Perchpaw to stay back...' Appledusk thought weakly.

Perchpaw ran up to him and said something that he couldn't comprehend. The bleeding warrior closed his eyes, his breathing slowing slightly.
He was in such agony and could feel every inch of his body, every single strand of fur and all his whiskers.
He felt someone grab his scruff and pull his body back to what he assumed was RiverClan camp.

His eyes still shut, he felt to weak to keep them open. He just couldn't muster up the strength; but what let him know that he was still alive was Perchpaw, at least he guessed it was Perchpaw, nudging his nubby tail.

"Come on Appledusk!" The dark apprentice mewed, tears started to spill, his dark blue eyes glistening.
"Stay alive! Please! I need you! You need to watch my warrior ceremony!"
Appledusk heard it, he had no idea but his hearing came back for a heartbeat or two though it was muffled and funny sounding.
Appledusk forced a weak smile and soon his breathing hitched.

And slowed.

And soon...

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.
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"Welcome Appledusk..."

Appledusk gasped as his green eyes widened in surprise.

Where was he? All his pain had vanished into thin air. He left as light as a feather but as strong as the whole of LionClan.
He felt younger, more quicker on his paws. He stood up, stretching his legs, and feeling more alive than he had in what seemed like moons!

He looked over, eyes stretching even widened as he met the mysterious cats gaze.
Their eyes were a pure, milky white, color. Looking as gentle as the first snow fall of the season.
They were tall, towering over him by a whole fox-length. Their pelt was as dark as the night sky. Stars, twinkling so brightly that it hurt his eyes, tangled and glimmering on their fur. Their fur was angelically long and whispy, looking like fog.

Looking like the whole of Silverpelt...

'Who was this?' he thought, blinking.
The cat looked down at him with a look that reminded him of his mother.
He felt something twist inside of him, a feeling which he hadn't felt in ages. It was was a warm feeling that made his paws feel tingly and his entire body even warmer with proud, bold emotions.

After a few moments of the two staring at each other, the cat purred. Bending down and nudging his ear with a soft nose.
Appledusk forced himself to stay put and not lean into this unknown cats pelt.
His heart raced, *'No, not just any cat.'* He thought, thoughtfully. *'It's a StarClan cat... One of my ancestors.'*
Appledusk blinked, the StarClan cat smiled and dipped their head in respect. *"You have guessed correctly..."*
Appledusk took a step back and looked at the cat wtih fear.
"How'd you-"

"You said it out loud."

The starry cat laughed, purring again.
"Appledusk, you have made me and your father proud."
Appledusk gasped, his mouth open agape, "Mom...? Russet-"
His mother, shushed him. Lifting her tail and placing it over his mouth.
"Yes. It is me."
After a heartbeat the shadowy-starry pelt disappeared and his mother's familiar pelt. One which they shared a color in. Appledusk hesitated, now feeling like a kit again as he stared up at his mother.

Before his mind could think, his paw moved for him and he pressed against him mother's chest, breathing in her scent.
Dear StarClan, how much he had missed her and his father.
Before he knew it, he felt a warm tear roll down his cheek. His mother purred again, nuzzling the top of her son's head. Licking his head tuft.

"Appledusk, let me show you something."

He looked up, sniffling as he took a step back. "Huh? What is it?" He meowed, his whiskers twitching. All he wanted to do was spend all

his time with his mother and his father.

His mother nosed towards in front of her. He spun around, tilting his head in confusion when he didn't see anything and then his mother slammed her paw on the cool, grassy ground. And in a blur of stars, they where back at RiverClan camp.

Sitting in the raining clearing, the rain phased through him. He shivered at the odd, uncomfortable feeling.

Appledusk blinked, a bit confused at the sight before him but then he gasped in pure horror as he saw himself. He was out of his body!

Flowers where tucked into his fur, mint and marigold, he recognized from his parents death vigil.
Darkstar was perched up on highrock, sadness and fear clouded her usually serious amber gaze as she stared down at his corpse. She said something he couldn't hear what she said properly. It sounded far to distant. Had the rain drowned out her voice?

He looked back down at his body, Spiketail, RiverClan's highly respected and loyal deputy, and his brother, was crying into his fur. Appledusk shuddered at the thought of dampness in his pelt. Not only by the rain but the thick tears coming from his brother.

Reedshine and Perchpaw where nuzzled into his fur, Perchpaw seemed to be asleep but Reedshine not so much.
She was trembling, her bulging belly pressed against the damp sandy clearing. Her tabby striped tail curling around her belly.

Appledusk widened his eyes in horror as he realized, this was no tale he was told as a kit, this was reality and he had ***died***.
He was... dead and there was nothing he could do about it!
The thought hit him like a monster racing down the thunderpath. He felt an icy chill run down his spine as he looked over at his mother before speaking. His mouth growing dry.

"But... I-I can't be dead! I have so much I want to do! I have so much *to* do!"
Appledusk looked at his mother. Grief settling deep in his chest.
"Im about to become a father- Reedshine's expecting *my* kits! I can't

leave her alone..."

"And how do you think your in StarClan then?" His mother inquired.

Appledusk fell silent as he watched some more. A heavy weight kept him in place as he felt another tear roll down his cheek. This time not of happiness, but the pain of the sudden realization. Grief taking ahold of his body.

He was really dead...

His mother sighed, fluffing out her tan coat and pressing against him, "there is no need to fret my love." She murmured, her tail slowly running down his spine.
"StarClan wishes to gift you something."

Appledusk averted his gaze from the scene that layed before him, "What is it?" He whispered.
The former queen licked her kit between his ears. It soothed him slightly.
"StarClan wishes to give you another chance at life."

Appledusk stood up fully now, his eyes wide with confusion, but also, hope.

"You have chosen a wrong path, and StarClan wishes you luck to take the other."

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.
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"So good luck, Appledusk ."

...

1350 words.

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A/N: HEYYYY WELCOME TO THE NEW BOOK! how are you?

Here is some love for reading this! ❤️🤍🤎💙💜🧡💕💖💗💓💗💞💗💗

BTW there will be no Alliance chapter because, no, I'm just, no. You'll see different characters and shit, I'll manage.

you'll see.

ALRIGHTY! thanks for reading and cya in the next chapter my peeps 🤡, creeps 🦠 and sickly sweets 🧬!

UPDATE: I'll add and Alliance soon- as soon as I get wifi lmao

UPDATE 2.0: Don't mind me just editing the book!!

Chapter 1》New Beginnings

The sounds of the rain that fell onto the sand clearing, thunder boomed into the distance. Russetstorm looked down lovingly at her kits.
"They look just like you, Russetstorm." Creeknose purred as he looked down at the kits, they let out tiny, helpless mews as they pawed at Russetstorm's pale round belly for milk.

Russetstorm each gave a lick to each kit in turn as she gently guided them to the curve of her belly, as they latched onto a teat and began suckling.

"The dark one looks just like your father." Russetstorm quietly mewed, her green eyes round, full of love.
"And this one has your fur color" Creeknose responded, intertwining their tails together.

"It'll be nice to have kits in the nursery. Ebonystream has been showing interest in wanting kits so, we might have more tiny paws soon." The medicine cat, Icewhisker, mewed as he stepped into the nursery, odd smelling herbs clamped in his jaw.
"Here, eat these, Russetstorm, you'll need them to sleep."

Russetstorm sniffed the herbs, the strong but familiar scents hit her nose as she sneezed, swallowing the herbs in a big gulp.
Icewhisker sighed and then gave a smile, "I'm sure Birchstar will be thrilled to have more cats in the clan." He congratulated.

Creeknose nodded, "how's Sloefur doing? She's been the deputy for as long as I can remember."

Icewhisker flicked his ears and sighed, "she's resting in the medicine cat den, I've given her fever few, and borage leaves, she *should* be better by the end of the week." The silver-grey tom forced a smile, his icy blue eyes clouded with fear.

He was just as worried as the clan.

Russetstorm looked down at the two bundles of fur, gently wrapping her tail around the two precious toms.

A crash of thunder lit up the sky, illuminating the camp in a bright white as a reed fell into the middle of the clearing. Flames clung onto the reed, the crackling of the flames sounded in the medicine cats ear.

Icewhisker looked at the reed in shock, his ears flying up in alarm;

"It's an omen!" The medicine muttered.

Icewhisker ran over to the reed, he examined the river reed as he noticed a sharp spiked thorn attached. A peice of burnt leaf hung from the sharp end of the reed.

"Spikes will blaze like fire, stars shaping a future."

*(**A/N**: ^^ This prophecy is absolutely cringe, stupid, and absolutely gives away everything- ik. But I won't be changing It much for simplicity sake xoxo)*

Russetstorm and Creeknose looked at each other before down at the dark furred tom-kit still nestled in the curve of her belly, his small pink mouth stretched in a tiny yawn as he pulled away from a teat.
"We wanted to name this one, Spikekit.." Russetstorm mewed.
"So, does that mean he'll be leader?" Creeknose questioned, looking away from his two sons.
"

if StarClan sent it, it must be true. *StarClan* would never lie." Russetstorm whispered as she nuzzled into Creeknose's chest fur.

•••

Applekit awoke to the sound of bustling outside the nursery, and mainly just Reedkit mewing loudly at Milkpaw and Darkpaw.

"Come on! Teach me how to fight!" Reedkit loudly let out a high pitched mew.
Applekit huffed at turned to face the annoying dark ginger she-kit. Applekit noticed Spikekit playing with a feather nearby. Creeknose must've given it to him, he guessed, shaking the warmth of sleep away. It smelt a little like him anyway.

Applekit scrambled to his paws and trotted over. Watching as Spikekit pawed at the feather mid-air and pounced, his tail wagged as it stuck up straight, biting down on the feather and then pawing at it again.

Applekit smiled and ran over, bowling into Spikekit.
"Gotcha!"
Spikekit yelped in fear, pushing Applekit off of him and into the nest he had just woken up and gotten out of. Spikekit shook dust and dirt off of his dark pelt. Huffing.

"Dont scare me like that!" His littermate squeaked.

Applekit stood up and looked outside the nursery. There, he saw Reedkit practicing a crouch of sorts with Milkpaw's help, but her tail was up and she was lopsided, making her fall over and into the sandy clearing. But she quickly got right back up, looking eager to try it again.

Applekit glanced at Spikekit before he walked out of the milky-warm nursery and over to the trio of she-cats.

Milkpaw tried instructing Reedkit how to properly do a hunters crouch, *again,* and Darkpaw watched on from the sidelines. Amusement twinkling brightly in her amber gaze as she stared at her younger sister and her best friend.

Applekit walked up from behind Reedkit, "What's going on?" Applekit mewed.

Darkpaw looked up and locked eyes with the tan tom-kit, "oh! Hey

Applekit! Milkpaw and I are teaching Reedkit how to do a hunters crouch, but she's failing *miserably*." Darkpaw whispered the last part quietly to Applekit, who was busy staring at Reedkit.

"Could you teach me how to do a hunters crouch, Darkpaw? In a few moons I'll be in the apprentices' den!"
Darkpaw purred, "of course Applekit! Let's go somewhere else so we won't,"-She flicked her tail towards Milkpaw and Reedkit- "bother those two."

Applekit padded after the taller she-cat, his tail pointed upward as excitement fueled his body as he realized the pair where already at a small sandy clearing.

"You ready *Applepaw*?" Darkpaw teased.

Applekit puffed put his chest fur to seem bigger and taller, it didn't seem to work. Darkpaw only stared down at him, amusement bright in her eyes.
"Why yes, of course, *Darkstar*" the kit teased back.
Darkpaw laughed and flicked her tail on his back.
"Alright! Now, show me your best crouch you have, and we can go off from there."

Applekit thought for a moment and got into what he thought was a good enough crouch, his breathing hitched as he focused on a cluster of reeds to keep him focused. It seemed to work as he didn't feel himself swaying.

He heard Darkpaw purr as she walked around him. Nodding approvingly.

"Put you tail down and separate your paws a bit further, and make sure you belly is near the ground. But not do close to it that your nearly dragging yourself." Darkpaw mewed, order sharp in her voice.

Applekit obeyed, wanting to be the best he could be as he shifted himself a bit, listening carefully to Darkpaw's instructions. Once done, he looked up at Darkpaw hoping he had got himself into the right position.

T

he apprentice studied his posture for a moment before giving an approving nod and a smile to match, "You'd fool me for an apprentice!" She smirked.

Applekit stood up, a bit wobbly and tired from staying crouched for so long. But his tiredness didn't last long as he felt his pelt grow hot at the praise.

"Thanks Darkpaw!" Applekit squeaked.

"Darkpaw? Where are you? Your going on a border patrol with me, Foxclaw, and Milkpaw!" Darkpaw looked over her shoulder and at the busy clearing before and sighing.

"Rippleheart will never give me a break." The black she-cat groaned, "Well, glad I could teach you something! Bye Applekit!"
And with that Darkpaw bounded off towards her mentor who was waiting with Foxclaw and Milkpaw near the entrance of camp.

"Applekit! There you are!" Reedkit mewed, running over towards him, her signature smile on her face.

"Oh, hey Reedkit." Applekit mewed, he wished he could be with his mother in the nursery.
His paws itching to run away from the dark orange she-kit.
"Wanna play moss-ball? Oh! Or wanna see what Milkpaw taught me?"

The she-kit didn't wait for Applekit's response as she jumped down into a messy looking crouch. Her hind wiggling as she darted forward and clawed at a pile of sand.

Applekit flicked his ear, blinking annoyed. "Yeah moss-ball sounds fun." He mewed.
Reedkit jumped to her paws, licking her chest fur, embarrassed.
"Oh, yeah. Right. duh."

Applekit looked around for his mother while Reedkit looked up at him.

After a few seconds she cleared her throat.
"Come on! Spikekit and Beekit will be joining us!"
After hearing his brothers name, Applekit felt a surge of energy flood through him and he bolted around Reedkit.
"Yeah! Let's go!!"

Reedkit struggled to catch up with Applekit as the two little kittens ran over to the nursery where Beekit and Spikekit were.
Once getting there, it seemed as if Reedkit and Applekit had caught the two in the middle of a game. The two play-wrestling, their dark pelts rolling around, kicking up dust and sand clouds as they played.

"Beekit! Spikekit! Come on! Let's play moss ball! Applekit agreed to join us!"
Spikekit looked over at his brother as he tugged on Beekit's ear with his teeth. Earning a squeal from the other tom-kit as he pushed Spikekit off with a laugh.
"

Finally! Let's play!" Spikekit cheered.

Beekit grabbed a pawful of moss from near the nursery and rolled it neatly into a little ball, chucking it towards Reedkit.
Reedkit caught it mid air and pawed it over towards Spikekit with a mighty hit, causing the ball of moss to go flying past Spikekit's little head.
"Reedkit! You made it fly across the whole clearing!" Beekit, Reedkit's brother, gasped watching it land.
"I know! It was great!" Reedkit giggled to herself, watching Spikekit chase after it.

The game went on till Darkpaw and Milkpaw finally came back from their Border Patrol came back.
Russetstorm and Frostfoot then called the kits back into the nursery for a nap and a feed as it was already sun-high.

Beekit whined, and Reedkit complained about how much fun they were having, while Spikekit kept rambling on-and-on about how he caught the moss-ball mid air when Beekit tossed it to him, and how cool it was.

Applekit walked towards the nursery beside his brother, only half-listening to what his brother was going on about, thinking about one thing that kept crossing his mind.

'Why was Reedkit staring at him weirdly when they where playing moss ball?'

•••

1704 words.

A/N: THIS TOOK A WEEK! worth it though. Now anybody have any OCS they want to sacrifice- I mean want me you use in the book? I have an idea for a few more apprentices (just 2 more lol) but that's it, and in need more cats! I also did a tad bit of research of the leader, deputy, and medicine cat of this time because I just wanted those to be accurate :/

Alright, my hands hurt a bit so Ima see yall in the next chapter, my peeps 👻, creeps 🐓 and sickly sweets 🍬! C Y A!

Chapter 2》Night-time Mishap

Applekit awoke up, his head foggy and warm from sleep, the cool night air flooded the nursery, making the small tom shiver more awake. Huddling closer to his mother's swollen pale belly.

Spikekit snored loudly in his ear, making the tan-furred tom flick his ear in irritation as he cast his brother a glare.
Applekit sighed and cuddled even closer to his mother, pressing his ears down.

Everything was fine until Applekit heard something scuffling around in the other end of the nursery.

Applekit felt his pelt bristle with fear as he opened his eyes, he was wide awake now. Frightened at what could be in the nursery here with him.
Slowly sitting up, he around the nursery, he could smell his fear scent as he scanned the nursery again for Intruders.

'I'll fight any cat who messed with RiverClan' the kit vowed as he quietly crept forward, using the hunters crouch Darkpaw had taught him a few sunrises prior.
He was careful enough not to step on his mothers, or brothers tail.

The scuffling got louder as Applekit crawled nearer to the end of the nursery. Where Frostfoot and her kits rested.

Applekit hated to admit it but, he was beyond terrified.

' What if it's another clan invading?! Or what if it's a fox, or a badger!?? '

Applekit almost whimpered before he snapped back to what he was doing and coutinued to go forward.

Applekit put his paw forward when he stepped on a old and wrinkled leaf. It crunched loudly underneath him as he quickly retracted his paw, pressing himself against the sandy ground, his green eyes wide with fear as the movement suddenly stopped, and then a silence flooded the den.

The only sound was the soft breeze in the trees, the crickets chirping, and a distant sound of water splashing gently against the stones.

It was so quiet and Applekit could hear his heartbeat pounding in his chest.

"Applekit?"

Applekit scrambled to his paws and narrowed his green eyes. Suddenly he recognized the dark tabby pelt creeping closer to him.

It was R eed kit .

"You fishface!" Applekit quietly hissed, fluffing his fur out. "You scared me!"

Reedkit appeared from the shadows, her usually dark orange pelt would look black if it wasn't for the moon lighting up the camp clearing and spilling into the nursery though the cracks in the ceiling: making her pelt turn a weird silver-orange.

"Me? Scare you?" Reedkit gave a teasing mew. Coming further out from the shadows and appearing about a mouse-length away from the tom-kit.

"Your funny, Applekit." She mewed, flashing a smile.

"Now, let's go play outside," She pointed with her slim tabby tail over towards the nursery entrance.

Applekit was bit jealous her tail was longer than his, his was just a little nub.

Russetstorm had gently assured him many times that her grandfather was born with a tail just like his, and even she had a shorter tail then the rest of her clanmates.

"It's getting stuffy in here, and I have a huge feather to play with!"

Reedkit turned back around, the shadows engulfing her, only for her to reappear with a feather the size of a mouse being dragged behind her.

"Where'd you find that?" The tan brown kit squeaked, running over and examining the soft toy.
It looked much different than the feather Spikekit had lost a few days ago, so it couldn't have been his.
Spikekit's feather had been white with a black tip, this one was... Well it looked silver because of the moon. But Applekit guessed that it had some type of stripes.

"Harethroat brought it back for me to play with! He said he snatched it after an owl swooped down and he yanked it off!" Reedkit looked down at the feather, pawing it with her small pale paws before she looked back up at Applekit. Puffing her chest out proudly.

"So, wanna play?'

Applekit smiled, how could he pass up and opportunity like this? Maybe he could even practice his hunters crouch again, and then he could become a warrior early!

•••

Sun poured into the nursery, Applekit awoke from the nudge of his mother, Russetstorm. "You should be up by now," Russetstorm mewed, giving her son a lick between his small ears. Smoothing down some kitten fluff.
"It's already Sunrise."

Applekit let out a yawn and blinked away the tiredness in his eyes, looking out into the clearing to see it busy with cats.

Sloefur was talking to Birchstar, his father, Creeknose, was talking to some other cats, one of them being Harethroat, Reedkit's father. The dark-ginger-and-brown tom had the same bright blue eyes as Reedkit. Applekit observed.

"Eeltail, Sagefoot, and Fogtail, let's go!"

Sloefur mew echoed into the nursery as the different dark pelts walked out of the camp.

"Where'd they go?" Applekit asked, standing up as his mother finished washing him. "Probably on a border patrol," his mother mewed. "Why don't you find your brother and go listen to Shadeeyes? I'm pretty sure he's telling a story."

Applekit squeaked with joy, he loved listening to Shadeeyes! He had to most interesting stories, like the time he fought a dog!

Russetstorm had said that Shadeeyes exaggerating everything he was saying, but Applekit didn't believe her, he didn't even care. It was still entertaining for him to listen.

As Applekit ran out of the nursery, Russetstorm calling after him, "Don't get under any-cats paws, Applekit!"

Applekit arrived to the elders den, the voice of Shadeeyes echoing in the vine covered den.

"What happened next?" The squeaky mew of Reedkit filling the toms ears.
"I *clawed* at his ears! No cat messes with RiverClan." Amusement was hinted in the elders mew.

"Applekit!" Spikekit meowed, running over towards him,
"You took forever to wake up!" Reedkit groaned.

Applekit padded fully into the den, his eyes adjusting to the darkness.
"Ah, hello little one." Kestrelsplash, an old dark furred she-cat with pink eyes, purred. Blinking sweetly at him.

"Hello! Russetstorm told me that Shadeeyes was telling a story!"

Shadeeyes purred, "your mother's right then, now come on, get settled. I'm still telling about my fight with ThunderClan over Sunning Rocks seasons back."

Applekit scrambled over and sat down between Spikekit and Beekit, looking up at the ancient grey elder.

"As I was saying, I clawed at that warriors ears! He howled in pain as my mentor at the time, Trouttalon, was attacking the deputy at the time, Jumpheart. He's sadly in StarClan now..."

~~~

Applekit woke up to a paw prodding his flank, and a voice whispering in his ear.
"*Psst,* Applekit! Come on! Let's go outside and play again!"

Applekit stirred and lifted his head, the silhouette of Reedkit stood tall as she looked down at the pale brown tom.

Applekit yawned, shaking his head as he scrambled to his paws, suddenly eager to play outside again.

The small ginger she-kit grabbed her striped feather from behind a rock she had hidden it behind, and pelted outside with it.
Applekit excitedly following after her.

Reedkit placed the feather in the middle of the clearing and wiggled her haunches and pounced on the feather, causing it to fly up and land right at Applekit's paws.

"Paw it back to me!" Reedkit whispered, her glowing blue eyes looking at him before down at the soft feather.

Applekit pawed at the feather, or at least... he thought he did.
The feather moved sideways but a pawful of sand and dust flew up and landed on the small toms muzzle and in his whiskers.

Applekit sneezed and looked at Reedkit, sniffling.
Reedkit looked back before she let out a little giggle.
"Your so silly, Applekit!"
"I got sand in my whiskers," he huffed, shaking his head.

While Applekit was trying to get the dust out of his whiskers, Reedkit was using the hunters crouch that Milkpaw showed her, stalking towards him before she pounced!
~~~

Applekit let out a surprised hiss and squirmed underneath the she-kit and pawed feebly at her.
Reedkit giggled again, meanwhile, Applekit whimpered. It felt like a badger was stomping on top of him!

Once Reedkit realized her denmates struggle, she jumped off and stared at Applekit, worried filled her gaze as she stared down at him.

"Ow! Reedkit!"

Reedkit sniffed the tom, nudged the toms stomach carefully with her nose. Applekit flinched away, hitting her head in the process.
"That hurts!" He hissed.
Reedkit flattered her ears and nudged the tom up to his paws.

"Lets go find Icewhisker!" Reedkit mewed as she pushed the tom towards the medicine den using her head.

Applekit limped towards the medicine den, letting out whimpers every step he took,
"You shouldn't have surprise attacked me!" He whimperd again.
"I'm sorry!" Reedkit frowned.

The two kits went into the medicine cats den, Applekit walked over to an empty nest and plopped himself down as he groaned in pain.

"Icewhisker! Icewhisker, Applekit needs help!"

The RiverClan medicine cat, Icewhisker lifted his head from his nest, looking over at the entrance to his den at little Reedkit who was panicking.

Yawning, Icewhisker stood from his nest tand groggily walked over, "what happened now?" Icewhisker flicked his whiskers, blinking away the sleep in his eyes.

"Applekit got hurt!"

Icewhisker opened his blue eyes, the sleepy look from earlier evaporating from his eyes.
"Is he in a nest, what happened?"

"I-I don't know!" Reedkit looked back at Applekit who was still laying in the same spot. "He just started groaning in pain! What if he broken?!"

Icewhisker padded over toward the once empty nest where Applekit lay, the small, sandy-brown kit mewled in pain and he scrunched up into a little ball.

"Applekit, look at me. Tell me what's wrong so I can get you some herbs to make it feel better."

Applekit blinked his eyes open, staring into the icy-blue ones of Icewhisker.

"My stomach hurts bad,"
Icewhisker blinked, "Is that all?"
"and my throat feels a bit dry..." Applekit whispered just loud enough for the silver-grey tom to hear.
"No fever?"
"No.."

Icewhisker sat up with a sigh, "I could use chervil, or water mint but I don't think we have that in store at the moment... Or borage but I'd like that save that for Russetstorm and Frostfoot.. Kestrelwing mentioned how crushes Iris petals are rather useful, but those aren't in season..."
Icewhisker flicked his tail after a few seconds, "Reedkit, watch over Applekit. I'll go and check to see if I have any chervil." He seemed oddly calm.

Reedkit ran over to the aching kit and cuddled next to him, giving him gentle licks between the ears.

"I'm sorry, Applekit!" Reedkit squeaked.

Icewhisker came back with a small sweet-smelling plant.
The silver-gray chewed it up and extracted the juices from the leaf, he then pushed the chewed up pulp in front of Applekit, nudging it closer to him with his nose.
"I'm gonna need you to try and eat this, it'll soothe your bellyache, I promise." The silver-grey tom mewed.

Applekit sniffed the plant and took at nibble off the plant, he hesitantly swallowed it. "My throat..."

Reedkit got to her paws and took off a relatively small chunk of moss off of Applekit's nest and stumbled towards a small stream that flowed in the medicine cat den.
She dipped the moss into the water, dropping it at his paws.
"I-its water right, to help his throat?"

Icewhisker nodded, "And honey. but we don't have a lot at the moment, and we only use it for serious bellyaches or the help cover up the taste of yucky herbs. But thank you Reedkit, I'm sure that will help his throat."

Applekit lapped at the moss, the water soothing his sore throat.
"Thank you..."

Reedkit smiled and walked towards Applekit, laying down and cuddled closer to the pale brown tom-kit, Applekit was suddenly grateful for Reedkit's warmth.
"I'll be here to keep you warm!" Reedkit nuzzled her face into Applekit's neck.
Applekit was to tired to protest otherwise.

Icewhisker watch the two kits, before he quietly padded out of the den.

Probably to tell Russetstorm...

...

2028 words

Chapter 3》"Never!"

It had been almost five sunrises since Applekit had a little stomachache.

Russetstorm clung to him like a flea to an elder, worrying about him every chance she got. Spikekit seemed to never come visit, Russetstorm had told him that his brother was just busy, and Reedkit visited every chance she got, along with her older sister, Darkpaw.

Applekit stretched and looked around the empty, the tangy and sweet smell of herbs clung to his pelt as he stumbled out of medicine cats den.
A nice breeze greeted him.
Icewhisker had said that he wanted to keep and eye on him. Leaf-bare was starting and the old medicine cat was worried Applekit might get whitecough.
...Which ended up worrying Russetstorm worse.

Applekit looked around, watching as a small patrol exited camp. Sloefur had got better after awhile and was finally able to lead a patrol! Dawnpaw, Mintface, and Eeltail followed after Sloefur as they disappeared.

"Hey, Applekit!"

Applekit turned his furry, tan head to meet Reedkits dark orange one.
"How are you feeling?" Reedkit smiled.

"Well, I guess okay. My bellyache is gone but Icewhisker still won't let me leave." He huffed, his small tail twitching.

"Well that's good!" Reedkit giggled, "do you think we can play today, maybe explore a little? Beekit said he found a cool spot just outside camp, and *I* wanna go see it!"

Applekit looked over Reedkit, to see Beekit and Spikekit wrestling in the background.

Beekit seemed to be winning, his dark brown pelt merging nicely with his brothers dark grey one. They seemed to be busy playing.

"So? What is it?"

Applekit blinked, shrugging. "I guess. It sounds fun."
Reedkit smiled wider and bounded over towards a patch of tall reeds need the entrance.
"Hurry up slow-poke!"
Applekit looked around, before he started to walk over. Halfway there, a voice called behind him.

"Applekit, what are you doing, love?"

It was Russetstorm.

Applekit looked over at his mother, "Reedkit and I we're going to go explore!" He pointed to where Reedkit hid behind the reeds.

"She said Beekit found a cool place just outside camp! I can go, can't I?"

Russetstorm looked fearful and her neck fur bristled as she protectively wrapped her tail around the kit.
"No! What if you get a thorn in your delicate, little paw pad or, or what if you run into a ThunderClan patrol!? Or worse, what if you run into the river and drown?! You still can't swim yet!"

Applekit gulped, fear scent racked his entire body and he looked up at his mother. Who was looking down at him.

"But—"
"Hush now Applekit, your going back the medicine den."
Applekit looked back at Reedkit who peered her head out from behind the reeds, her blue eyes wide with sadness.

He rested his ears flat against his head as he mouthed the words, *'sorry Reedkit'* as he was nudged back into the medicine den.

•••

Applekit sighed as he looked over at the entrance to the

medicine cat den. It was boring in here. He wondered what Spikekit was doing right now.

Icewhisker had returned ages ago from looking for herbs. He was now shuffling around and sorting the herbs.
Putting the gross ones in a pile, and then placing the good ones in a neat, separate piles.

Applekit turned away from the entrance that looked out into the clearing.
There wasn't anything interesting going on out there anyways.

Only a couple warriors eating prey together and talking about patrols, none of the apprentices we're in camp so it was quiet, and Kestrelsplash and Sunstorm were basking in the sun together.

Applekit had nothing better to do so he wandered towards Icewhisker, the old tom was muttering underneath his breath the names of leafs and berries and roots as he sorted them.
He had a rather bit pile of a delicious-smelling plant. The den was suddenly dark because of the clouds covering the sun, so Applekit couldn't tell what color it was.

"What's that?" Applekit curious mew surprised the tall silver tom.
"Oh! What was that, Applekit?"
Applekit let out an annoyed 'huff' as he scrambled to his tiny paws.

"What's *that*?" he said, pointing with his tiny pink nose at a leafy plant, "this. it smells gross and sour."
Icewhisker blinked, his lips turning into a kind smile.
"That's fever-few. I use to... Well, cure fevers. It helps reduce a cats body temperature."
Applekit let out a small, *"oh."*

Applekit pawed at another plant, the yummy smelling one, which he now saw had grayish-green leaves and little, pale purple flowers.
"What about this?"
Icewhisker looked at the plant, twitching his whiskers as she moved it to the pile.
"This is whole pile is catmint! It's the best herb to use against greencough. We usually don't have this much right at the start of

Leaf-bare, but I'm not complaining."
Applekit flicked his tiny bobbed tail, "do you have a lot because of me?" his tiny mew dropped into a whisper.

Icewhisker sighed and pushed the pile of catmint away, looking down at the little kit. "Yes." He answered honestly.
"Everytime your mother sees your father, she begs him to find catmint for you. You don't need any, of course, but your mother's just worried. And If anything, your father might as well become a medicine cat with all the herbs he's bringing!" He chuckled, attempting to joke.

"You only have a little stomach ache, Applekit. And I'm sure it's already passed by now."
Icewhisker's eyes sparkled, "My former mentor, Kinktail, would've probably just given you grass and sent you on your way!"

Applekit pulled a face, "*grass!* That's weird!" He squeaked.
Icewhisker purred, his tail swishing behind him. "yes, grass! It's actually a rather good remedy for an upset stomach once eaten."
"Does it taste gross?"
"Grass? Not really. It's kinda weird. Most of the time grass doesn't really have a taste, it's just chewy. And it tastes *a lot* better with honey."

Applekit nodded.

"So, why didn't you give me grass, Icewhisker?"
"I was going to," the silver-gray tom chuckled, watching Applekit blink surprised,
"but then I realized it might be a bit more than a simple tummy ache with Leaf-bare right around the corner. So I gave you some chervil."

Applekit, without thinking, asked, "what's it like being a medicine cat? Is it boring?"

Icewhisker twitched his long, clear whiskers with amusement.

"I don't know, why don't you become one and find out?"

Applekit looked at Icewhisker as he stared in the older medicine cats icy blue orbs, his own emerald green eyes wide with shock.

"Become one..?"

Icewhisker smiled and gave a small nod.
"Yes! Your only four moons, I know, but your energetic and learn things quickly. I'm getting on in age and I'm in need of an apprentice."

Applekit almost flinched, a voice inside of him telling him to not scream but he shoved it down and bristled.
Icewhisker didn't seem to notice the bristling kit as he continued on with the *horrid* question.

"Our little conversation today has shown me that your curious. And you seem to enjoy learning about herbs, and if you become a medicine cat, Applekit, you'd learn more herbs, and speak with your StarClan ancestors! You'd get to heal your clanmates, and meet with the other medicine cats."

Icewhisker opened his maw to speak more fish-brained nonsense but Applekit's cut the much older tom off.

"*Never!*"

Icewhisker looked down shocked. "Applekit it was—"

"No! I don't want to be a stupid medicine cat! I don't want to learn stupid healing herbs! I want to be a warrior and fight!"
Applekit stumbled to his tiny pale paws and raced out of the Medicine Cat den.
He pushed past a shocked Darkpaw who stumbled back, and watched Applekit run away with wide amber eyes.

Applekit ignored the sound of Darkpaw calling after him, asking "what happened?"

He hissed quietly as the tangy smell of herbs that clung heavily to his pelt engulfed his sense of smell.
'***Stupid herbs!!***' he thought as he pelted past the tall dark reeds.

Applekit ran till he reached the edge of the river bank, the pebbles felt cool underneath his paw-pads as he sighed.
'I was just bored!' Applekit looked across the river, *'What gave him the idea that I wanted to be his apprentice?!'*

As the sandy-brown tom-kit stared across the river, towards ThunderClan territory, he saw as two tiny pelts burst from the greenery and scurried across the land towards Sunning Rocks.
One of the kits was pale ginger with a few dark markings, the other was a fluffy calico.
He watched as the two fellow kits yowled in fear, trying to get to the top of the Sunning Rocks, but they could barely get themselves up to the first rock.

Confused, Applekit watched as a fox cub chased after the two other kits.

It's small eyes wide with hunger as it's mouth watered, long, stringy drool flew out of its mouth.

Fear soon hit Applekit hard, and RiverClan kit scrambled to his paws, watching as the pale ginger kit pushed their friend up to the first boulder.*'They're in trouble!'*

Applekit knew he had to act fast despite being small himself and whipped his head around looking for other cats.
He noticed Darkpaw run out the camp entrance with Creeknose, the deputy; Sloefur, and Mudbelly.

Creeknose ran over towards him, checking him for any scratches. "What where you thinking? Running off like that!"

Applekit shook his head and quickly looked across the river, "Theres a fox cub and two kits! T-they need help!!"

Creeknose looked over, his eyes growing wide. "I'll go get more warriors!" Darkpaw mewed frantically, pelting back through the camp entrance.

"*Daisykit*!" A high pitched wail sounded from across the river.

Applekit snapped his head to see one of the fox cubs dragging a

pale ginger bundle of fur and throw it across and onto the base of Sunning Rocks.
It yelped excitedly, looking over at its other fellow fox cub before and chased after the unmoving bundle of pale fur, grabbing it again in its strong jaws and swung it back and forth, before letting go of it and flinging it across the clearing. Barking happily as it hit a tree with a sickening thud.

Creeknose dug his long, hooked claws into the ground, and looked over at Sloefur, Sloefur looked back the tall tom and leaped into the river and swam across, *'faster than a minnow!'* Applekit thought, Darkpaw had arrived again with other warriors as they swam across the river and jumped into the fight.

Applekit gulped and ran over towards the stepping stones, the river was low so if he fell in it wouldn't cause any isues.
He leapt forth and wobbled on a stone one, he dug his claws around the rock and shook his haunches, ready to leap. He braced himself and leaped onto the next stone, and then the next until the grass that started ThunderClan territory came into veiw.

Applekit landed on the grass and looked around for the other kit. Scrunching up his nose at the terrible ThunderClan smell, he finally saw her, the bristling, but tiny shivering calico pelt of a kit pressed down low on Sunning Rocks.She looked around his age.

Bounding over he sat down next to the ThunderClan kit, "Hi!" He greeted kindly, "I'm Applekit, you are?"

The calico she-kit looked over, her startled blazing amber eyes locking onto his own emerald green eyes, "Maplekit..." A
pplekit gave a calming smile, "that's a nice name, Maplekit"
"I'm such a terrible sister..." Maplekit mewed, catching Applekit off-guard.
"Huh?"

Maplekit slumped over, tear streaming down her face,
"I decided that we should go exploring! And she dead because of me!" Maplekit sobbed, leaning into his shoulder.
Applekit gave her a lick between her ears and just sat there while Maplekit sobbed into his pelt, while his clanmates fought the fox

cubs.

Little did he know, that this meeting, would change his life to the worst, or maybe the better. . . .

...

2027 words

Chapter 4》First Snow

Applekit yawned awake, and looked over at his brother, Spikekit, as he stirred in his sleep. Spikekit's flank rising and falling as he snored softly, turning over in the nest.

Applekit sat up and blinked, it had been almost a moon and half since Applekit had saved that ThunderClan kit, *Maplekit* from those fox cubs.
Her sister, Daisykit? ....not so much.

Creeknose has told him that death is natural, and just a fact of life. And if anything, is wasn't their fault that Maplekit's sister had died, it was their parents fault because nobody had kept an eye on them.

Applekit felt a pang of sadness everytime he thought of the fox attack, he had never met a cat so... *sad*.

Getting to his paws, he walked over towards the entrance of the nursery, as he saw as tiny white spots and speckles falling from the sky. It felt like late morning, but it certaintly didn't look it. He blinked, something urged him to wake Spikekit up and show him what was happening!

'The stars are falling from the sky!'

Scrambling over to the nest, Applekit pawed Spikekit in the side, "Spikekit!" He whispered, "Spikekit, wake up! Something's happening to the sky!"

Spikekit rolled over, dark green eyes clouded with sleep as he yawned.
"What happened?" He mewed sleepily, sitting up in their shared nest.
Applekit pointed with his nose towards the entrance to the nursery, "the sky's falling!" He whispered loudly.
Spikekit blinked, his eyes going wide. "what?"

Applekit turned away and bounded over towards the nursery entrance, "look!"

Spikekit followed, gasping. His thin tail twitching. "Is it dangerous?"
Applekit shrugged, "I don't know, I haven't gone out in it... Maybe you should try it, Spikekit!"
Spikekit puffed out his chest and smirked, "I'm not a scaredy-mouse! Not like *you,* Applekit!" Spikekit purred, wiggling his hind quarters and leaped out into the white stuff that covered the clearing.

Spikekit rolled around in the silverly-white stuff, his dark pelt getting covered in white. "Ah! It's cold!" His brother squeaked.
Applekit laughed and ran towards his brother, tumbling into him as the cold white stuff flicked up and fell on his tan pelt.
It *was* cold!
Spikekit squealed, kicking Applekit off. "My paws are freezing!"
Applekit laughed, shaking his pelt off, white specks flaking off.

"What even is this stuff??" Applekit asked, flicking his nubby tail.
Spikekit shrugged, his ear twitching.
"I don't know, let's ask Russetstorm."
The dark grey tom pelted back towards the nursery, Applekit ran after his brother, to where he saw Spikekit shaking Russetstorm awake. Applekit was still walking towards them as Russetstorm raised her head, and stretched open her maw in a huge yawn.

"Spikekit, Applekit? My little minnows, what's wrong?" His mother asked, her pale green eyes flashed with concern.
"Me and Spikekit where wondering what the white stuff outside was!"
Russetstorm above their little heads, outside into the RiverClan clearing and have a soft smile.
"It's the first snowfall of the season." She meowed quietly. Soon, her smile fell as she looked down at Applekit, mumbling something underneath her breath.

Spikekit didn't seem to notice Russetstorm mumbling but Applekit certainly did.

Applekit turned away to look out into the clearing just in time to see Sloefur limp out of the warriors den, heading across towards the

Medicine Cats den.
Birchstar exited the Leaders' Den, padding towards the fresh-kill pile and picking out a fat perch. The RiverClan didn't even seems fazed by the... *snow*, that fluttered down from the cloudy sky.

Applekit watched Creeknose leave the Warriors' Den. His dad looked up at the sky, he took a breath and a cloud of frost billowed from his lips.

The warrior tom turned towards the snow-covered fresh-kill pile and grabbed something before her and walked over towards the nursery. His paws crunching on the white snow.

Applekit smiled, turning his head towards Spikekit who looked at him in turn, excited smiles both plastered wide on their faces.

Creeknose popped his head in the nursery entrance and immediately Spikekit raced towards him. "Hiya Creeknose!"
Applekit ran over next to his brother, his little tail up in the air. "Dad!"

Creeknose purred and dropped what he was holding, a mouse, at his big, pale paws.
"Aren't you two going to be strong warriors! I brought some breakfast for you two to share, If your mother says it's alright?"

Applekit was the first to turn towards his mother, "*Pleaseee* Russetstorm!" Spikekit nodded quickly.
Russetstorm thought for a moment, her fluffy tail flicking, "I don't know..." She began, Applekit looked at his brother, as if Spikekit understood, the two brother both said in unison; *"PLEASEEEE MOM!"*
Russetstorm smiled, "oh, alright."

Spikekit smiled wide and and turned towards the mouse taking a bite and chewing it, letting out an audible *'mmm!'*

Applekit took a bite of the mouse, the flavors danced on his tongue as he closed his eyes in satisfaction. Swallowing the food he licked his lips and began to eats some more.
"Don't eat to fast!" His mother warned, "we don't need you to get bellyache! Especially you, Applekit.." Applekit flicked his ear and

continued to eat.

After finishing as much of the mouse as the could, with the help of Spikekit, the brown tom heard the squeals of his two favorite apprentices.

Walking out into the snow covered clearing, he noticed the dark gray pelt of Darkpaw, and the blending white pelt of Milkpaw both jumping up and down like excited kits.
"What happened!" He called out excitedly to his friends.
Darkpaw looked over at Applekit, her dark blue eyes seemed startled, but soon relaxed when she saw who it was.

"Foxclaw and Rippleheart said Darkpaw and I passed out warrior assessments!" Milkpaw answered for her friend, bouncing over.

Applekit blinked and then gave a wide smile, "What do you think your warrior names are gonna be?" He squeaked.
Milkpaw thought, "I hope it's something cool! Like, Milkfrost or something! After my mentors sister! Y'know Frostfoot?"
Applekit blinked and then looked at Darkpaw who was still in thought. Thinking hard about her warrior name.
Milkpaw sighed and bent down, whispering in his ear. "She's been over thinking what her warrior name's gonna be. She's been like this since dawn."
Applekit nodded.

"But whatever it is, I know she'll still be the same furball we all love." Milkpaw purred, casting a look at Darkpaw who was now pacing in a circle.

"Let all cats old enough to swim, gather beneath the reed bed for a clan meeting!"

The dawn patrol, lead by Sloefur, had just arrived and placed their prey down. Cats gathered around the reed bed, Darkpaw snapped out of her thoughts and bounded over next to her mentor Rippleheart, and Milkpaw sat by Foxclaw. Saying their goodbyes to him.

Just then Applekit was picked up by the scruff, Applekit squeaked

and squirmed in the cats grip.
"Calm down, Applekit!" The muffled voice of his father sounded, being placed next to his mother and brother. Russetstorm wrapped her fluffy tail around her sons and began to groom them both.

Spikekit squirmed while he was being cleaned, and Applekit blinked and wondered what his **own** warrior name would be.

'I hope it's not Appletail..' the kit thought, *'Maybe it'll be Appleheart? Oh! What about, Appleclaw?! That sounded cool!'*
As he thought a name passed through his mind, one he enjoyed the most. *'Appledusk.'*

Trying hard to focus on the ceremony, he watched as Birchstar beckoned Darkpaw and Milkpaw forward.

"Milkpaw, you have been training hard for moons and it's time for you to get your warrior name, by the power invested in me and by the powers of StarClan and our warrior ancestors, you shall now be known as, Milkfur. We honor you humor and skill. We welcome you as a full warrior of RiverClan."
Milk*fur* smiled bright, touching noses with her leader before nodding at her mentor and clanmates.
She purred loudly as she sat down, looking over at her best friend, Darkpaw.

Darkpaw fidgeted in her spot, her claws digging into the snow covered earth. Her tail twitched nervously.
"Darkpaw," the light brown tabby she-cat's pale blue eyes softened as she stared down at the black apprentice. "Please, come forth." she mewed softly.
Darkpaw took a deep breath before she got to her paws and stepped forward, standing in front of the crowd and looking up at the leader.

"Darkpaw, you have been training hard for moons, and it's time you become a warrior and receive your warrior name, by the power invested in me and by the power of StarClan *and* our warrior ancestors, you shall be known as, Darkshadow. We honor your intelligence and bravery. We welcome you as a full warrior of RiverClan." Dark*shadow* blinked up at leader.

The clearing fell quiet, cats looking at each other with unclear expressions. Applekit looked around.

*'Why is noone calling her name? Or Milkpaw's?' Oh wait, it's Milk*fur *now!'*

After a few seconds, the small tom-kit spoke up in chant. Being as loud as he could as her cheered for his friends.

"**Milkfur, Darkshadow!**"

The two newly made warriors looked at the small tom and smiled. Spikekit spoke up, then Russetstorm, then Creeknose, Rippleheart and Foxclaw, and soon the entire clan was chanting the names of RiverClan's new warriors.

" Milkfur , Darkshadow ! Milkfur , Darkshadow ! Milkfur , Darkshadow !"

Sloefur smiled, and dipped his head towards the Applekit.

Applekit felt a rush of pride and looked up at his mother. His mother looked back down at him, and licked the top of his head. Right between his ears.

"You'll make me proud, won't you?" She whispered. Applekit blinked at up at her, his pale green eyes round, and full of confusion.

But a small voice told him not to question Russetstorm. She was just worrying over him. Like always.

"Of course, Russetstorm." He whispered back.

Russetstorm relaxed with a quiet sigh, her tail uncurling from around him.

"Good. Make me proud, Applekit. Be honest and follow your heart. Make me and your father proud, sweetheart."

Russetstorm smiled, and looked back up. She turned to look at her beloved mate, Creeknose, who was bent over and whispering something to Spikekit.

Spikekit had his head bent sideways before finally Creeknose nosed his son's cheek with his nose.

Creeknose looked over at Russetstorm and gave her a smile, before

he gave a small nod. Applekit was confused as his parents then looked over at Birchstar, RiverClan's leader.

Applekit cast his brother a glance, but Spikekit was looking ahead with a determined expression, so Applekit sat up more straight. Trying to copy his brother.

Frostfoot had finally come out of the nursery with Reedkit and Beekit in tow. They both looked cleaned and excited.
The black-brown RiverClan queen scanned the clan for someone and after sometime gave up. Instead sitting down behind her kits, and looking down at them with tired, love-filled eyes.

Birchstar, the pale tabby she-cat flicked her tail and yowled into the clearing.

"May we stay gathered as we are welcoming *four* new warrior apprentices." the molly looked over at Applekit and his friends, blinking kindly.
Russetstorm nudged him towards the middle of the clearing, his brother, Spikekit following behind.

Applekit felt a rush of intense, positive emotions swirl through him. He felt the feeling go to the tips of his whiskers, to the little tip of his tail as he realized what was happening.

'I'm becoming an apprentice!!'

•••

EDIT: 2015 Words.

A/N: guess who decided to update this story?? I did!

Yeah, mega cliffhanger but, hey, gotta do what you gotta do mate, wanna keep things interesting! Now I have an idea for what's gonna happen next but, you have to wait and see because, I already have 1300 words on this bitch and I'm not abt to type anymore that this N/A.

Anywho, my hands low-key kinda hurt and I'm not abt to type anymore, lol. So I'll see you my peeps 🐣, my creeps 🕷, and

sickly sweets *, in the next chapter!*

Chapter 5》apprenticeship at last!

Applekit smiled wide looking over at his friends. Reedkit caught his eye, and she seemed equally as excited and bounded forwards towards Applekit.

"We're becoming apprentices!" she whispered, her bright blue eyes sparkled her tabby-striped tail high up.

Spikekit and Beekit followed from behind, the clan gave excited murmurs. One warrior in particular, Shellskip, a large silver tabby tom, was looking at him and smiled as he turned back towards his clanmates.

The group of four had made it to the middle of the clearing, and Applekit, the sandy-brown tom-kit looked up at Birchstar as she stood proud and strong.

"Leaf-bare will bring rough times, and apprentices made in the very beginning of leaf-bare is very risky but it will also make our clan strong!" the RiverClan leader yowled, Applekit's clanmates erupted into excited and prideful yowls in reply.
Applekit looked over at his brother, Spikekit's dark green eyes seemed wide and sparkled as if he imagined himself repeating the same thing.

Birchstar looked back down at the kits, a inviting smile on her face, "these kits have reached six moons which means they are ready to become apprentices." The pale tabby looked down a the four kits. "Beekit, step forward."

The dark brown tabby tom-kit seemed surprised, but he raced forward and stood in front of the high-stones that Birchstar stood upon. Her long tail twitched behind her as Beekit scanned the crowd for his new mentor.

"Beekit, you have grown to the age of six moons, which means you are most definitely ready to become a warrior apprentice, until you

receive your warrior name you shall be known as Beepaw and your mentor will be... Mintface." The fluffy black she-cat seemed surprised, as she looked around at her fellow clanmates.
"Mintface, this will be your first apprentice. I expect for you to pass down your compassion and smarts down to this young tom."
Mintface blinked and smiled as got to her paws and made her way towards the dark brown–nearly black– tom. Her new apprentice.

She bent down and touched noses with the dark apprentice, forming their new bond as mentor and apprentice.

Birchstar nodded, looking back at the group of now three kits.

"Reedkit, it is time for you to be apprenticed," The dark orange tabby she-kit smiled wide, her blue eyes sparkled brighter, if that was even possible, and quietly stamped her paws to the ground in excitement. Birchstar smirked, and welcomed the kit forward.

"You have reached the age of six moons, and until you receive your warrior name you shall be known as Reedpaw. Your mentor will be Shellskip."
Shellskip blinked and walked over, "Shellskip, this will be your second apprentice, you taught Frostfoot well and I expect for you to share your loyalty and honesty with this young apprentice."
Shellskip dipped his broad head and touched noses with the new, bouncing apprentice.

Sighing, the leader looked at Spikekit, his brother seemed nervous as Birchstar stepped down to face the kit.

"Spikekit, you have reached the age of six moons." The clan seemed quiet as Birchstar twitched her whiskers, "you have grown strong and I, Birchstar, leader of RiverClan, will be your mentor. I hope to pass everything I know to you. Until you receive your warrior name you shall be known as Spikepaw." the clan gasped as Birchstar touched noses with the shocked apprentice.

The only three cats who weren't surprised were Russetstorm, Creeknose, and Icewhisker. The medicine cat had padded to sit beside his parents.
Applekit's pelt rippled with unease as the white tom's gaze rested on him.

Leaping back onto high stones, her amber gaze landed on Applekit. Spikepaw had hesitated before rushing to sit beside Beepaw and Mintface.

"Applekit," she purred, "like your brother and former nurserymates, you have grown big and strong and have reached the age of six moons." Applekit seemed fixated on the leader, the sun seemed to be in the perfect spot. She covered the sun and Applekit opened his mouth a bit. She looked like a StarClan cat! Birchstar continued, "I expect nothing but the best from you, so, your mentor will be Rainwhisker."

The clan gasped, and so did Applekit, Rainwhisker was the most talented warrior in all of RiverClan! He was brave, smart, an amazing fighter according to his dad, *and* he was excellent with the she-cats.

Rainwhisker seemed unfazed as he walked to the front of the clearing to meet Applekit in front of the clearing.
Rainwhisker purred at Applekit, his icy-blue eyes seemed to pop from his snow white pelt. His nicked ear twitched as the RiverClan lead spoke. "From this day forth, until you receive your warrior name, you shall be known as, Applepaw. Rainwhisker, Applepaw will be your third apprentice, you have taught Leafsplash and Honeytail both, *very* well and I hope you can teach this young apprentice everything you know."

Rainwhisker smirked and looked over his shoulder at a group of she-cats, Applepaw noticed Honeytail and Leafsplash in the group, the she-cats seemed to melt as he winked at them. High-pitched, lovesick whispers erupting from the group of she-cats.

The clan yowled as they began to chant the four new apprentices' names, *"Beepaw, Reedpaw, Spikepaw, Applepaw!"*

Applepaw looked over at his fellow clanmates, and then his parents. Creeknose smiled warmlu as Russetstorm rested her head on Creeknose's shoulder. Icewhisker dipped his head. Applepaw felt like this was his moment, looking over at his brother who was looked at him in turn.
From the corner of his eyes, he noticed Reedpaw, Beepaw, and

Darkshadow's parents, Harethroat and Frostfoot, arguing quietly near the Elders' Den.
Beepaw didn't seem to notice, talking to his new mentor excitedly, but Applepaw was most certain Reedpaw did, but she had chose to ignore them.

Applepaw strained his ears, their argument became clearer.

"I swear! if you didn't want kits, then you shouldn't have mated with me! or did you just want your legacy to go on while you chased after Petalfoot?!"

Harethroat looked down at Frostfoot, anger flared in his dark blue gaze as it landed on the striped she-cat.

"Don't you dare bring Petalfoot into this." he growled, "she did nothing."

"She did nothing, but *you* did something!" Frostfoot retorted, her amber-yellow eyes flashing with fury. "Our kits have just had their apprentice ceremony and you're trying to go after a she-cat who's still a new warrior! you disgust me, Harethroat."

Harethroat stiffened and unsheathed his claws. "Watch yourself," he sneered, "unless you wanna be cut again..."

The former queens ears went back as fear filled her face, her eyes clouding with fear. "N-no!" she begged quietly, looking around to make sure no cat heard or saw her.
Applepaw just stared as Frostfoot locked eyes with the small tom for a moment, before she blinked and looked away.

Applepaw stopped straining his ears after that, trying to process what he had just heard. He imagined if his parents fought. *'But they'd never. They love each other.'*

Reedpaw walked over towards him and sat down, her tail curling over her paws. "You saw?" she asked.
Applepaw shuffled his paws, "with your..."
"parents." Reedpaw finished, "I don't think they like each other. After Beepaw and I were born, Harethroat seemed... distant..."
Applepaw sighed, "let's talk about this after the ceremony!" he mewed, Reedpaw nodded and flicked her striped tail.
"Thanks, Applepaw." Applepaw blinked, a warm feeling bubbled inside of him, the way she said his name seemed... oddly calming...

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Applepaw was curled up in his new nest in the Apprentices Den. He shuffled, not used to sleeping by himself, but by his mother side. He lifted his head and looked over at his brother and their friends.

Spikepaw was sleeping quietly his flank rising and falling. *'How can he sleep alone?'* Applepaw thought with silent sigh.

He looked over towards Reedpaw, she was surely asleep, her flank doing the same rising and falling as his brother.

He looked around the den, but Beepaw was nowhere to be seen. Panic set in as he carefully got to his paws making sure not to tread on any cats long tails as he walked out of the Apprentices' Den.

He flicked his ears, looking around to make sure no cat saw him sneak out to find Beepaw. Their mentors had shown them a little bit around the snowy territory, like Sunning Rocks and The Stepping Stones. And the semi-frozen river. *'Beepaw must be around there.'* He thought.
"He couldn't have gone far..." Applepaw murmured, doing a final look he pelted towards the entrance.

"Beepaw!" Applepaw whisper shouted, the tan tom looked up at the sky, silverpelt seemed to have disappeared as the dark, dark blue sky seemed plain. Not a single speckle of white, it had stopped snowing a little after their Apprenticeships.

Applepaw sniffed the frosty air as he made it towards the edge of the frozen river. He froze, Beepaw's scent was incredibly fresh.
He shook his head, green eyes flickering around he couldn't see his friend, but he could certainly smell him.

Applepaw walked around the territory nervously until he saw Beepaw, the dark tabby, was clawing something into the lightly snow powdered ground, and then stomped and wiped it away with a hiss of frustration.

"Beepaw?" He whispered, his breath turning into a frosty cloud as he pushed past a clump of dark reeds.
Beepaw's ears flew up in alarm and his claws unsheathed as he jumped around to face Applepaw.

"Who's there!" Beepaw spat, his yellow eyes flashing with panic.
Applepaw blinked in surprise and padded over towards the frightened apprentice. "Beepaw, what in the name of StarClan are you doing here??"

Beepaw froze, "Applepaw?"
Applepaw sighed, "yes, now answer my question. What are you doing out here? It's cold and dark."
Beepaw flicked his ear, "I... I don't think I belong here... I don't belong in RiverClan!" Beepaw blurted out, looking down at his shuffling paws.

Applepaw opened his maw to speak but Beepaw cut him off before any words were spoken.
"I don't want to swim, I want to climb trees! like, In ThunderClan! My mom told me a bunch of stories of how they fly up trees, and hunted mice and birds, and *squirrels*." Beepaw smiled, he sounded so confident, so sure of himself.

Applepaw seemed surprised, "ThunderClan?" He whispered.
Maplekit's crying face flashing in his mind. He shook his head.
Why'd he always think of her?
It was starting to make him feel paranoid, as if every cat could read his mind.

"Beepaw, you- you want to join our rival clan?" Applepaw breathed.
Beepaw nodded.

"I don't think I belong here... Applepaw, I-I.... I belong in *ThunderClan*." The dark apprentice seemed relaxed, having told his secret to some cat probably made him feel better.
"But we just had our apprentice ceremonies. You were asking so many questions about the territory!"
"I know.." Beepaw twitched his tail.
There was a silence as Applepaw watched Beepaw think. His friend hesitated to say more, shutting his maw.

"So. When do you plan on leaving...?"
Beepaw flinched, "I'm not too sure, maybe in a moons time? The gathering is soon so I'll ask to join ThunderClan then!"
Applepaw smiled, "I hope you get in, Beepaw." Beepaw walked over

and leaned into Applepaw, "Thanks..."

The two young apprentices walked back to camp, chattering quietly when all of a sudden the foul stench of... *decay* hit both toms in the face. Filling their noses with the horrid smell.

"What is that?" Beepaw gagged, the two apprentices looked at eachother and followed the trail where the smell grew.
"It smells like crow-food!" Beepaw hissed, Applepaw scrunched his nose up.
"How'd you know what crow-food smells like?"
Beepaw had his nose scrunched up as well as he shrugged. "I dunno, this is what I guess it smells like..."

After what seemed like forever the duo found the source of the smell.

"Is that a rat?"
"I don't know, go look at it! I dare you!"
"Ew! gross! you do it then!"
"Nuh-uh! I dared you first! No- now I'm double daring you to look!"
"That's not fair! You can't do that!! *And* I dared you second! Two is better than one which mean you have to do it now!"
"That's not how the rule goes, Beepaw."
Beepaw huffed, "it does now."

Applepaw rolled his eyes and walked over towards the rat he walked around it, the smell horrid, as he nudged it, it rolled over to expose a huge bite mark.
Applepaw jumped back, flies buzzing.

"There's a huge bite mark! ...gross." Applepaw turned away, covering his nose with his paw to try and get the smell out of his nose.
Beepaw went on his toes to look over Applepaw's shoulder.
"We should go report it to Birchstar or our mentors!"
Applepaw gulped, "what if its the fox cubs mom? what if it goes into RiverClan!"
Beepaw rolled his yellow eyes, "that's why we need to report it back to Birchstar!"

Applepaw nodded and ran towards the RiverClan entrance, quickly taking notice of the sky fading into a warm amber color as the sun began to rise. Beepaw hot on his paws, when a patrol came out, consisting of Reedpaw, Spikepaw, Rainwhisker, Russetstorm, Mintface, and Birchstar.

"Applepaw!"

Applepaw fell to the ground with an gasp when Reedpaw flew herself on-top of him, his mind dizzy at the sudden force.
"Where were you? you weren't in your nest!" Reedpaw's tone changed drastically to one of worry.
Applepaw pushed Reedpaw off and shook his pelt as if it were heavy with rain. Reedpaw scrambled to her paws and stared at Applepaw, concern clear as day on her face.

"It doesn't matter, Beepaw and I found some prey with a weird sent on it! we don't know the scent but it smells new!"
Rainwhisker stepped forward, icy eyes narrowed.
"Take us to it."

Applepaw nodded and ran back towards the rat, the patrol following close behind. Applepaw and Beepaw raced the path they had just walked.
"It smells terrible!" Reedpaw complained.
Spikepaw flicked his tail, "well make sure you remember the scent, it could be useful." Reedpaw stuck her tongue out in disgust, scrunching up her nose."ew! yuck!"
Russetstorm turned her head, let out a low hiss. "Hush! the animal could still be around here, and you could be leading it right towards us!"
Reedpaw froze up, "I-I'm sorry!!"

Once they finally reached the spot, the flies still buzzing around the decaying carcass of the rat, Birchstar walked over and sniffed the mauled rat, letting out a low growl.
"Fox." she confirmed, "fresh too, at least a day or two old, come on! Let's go back to camp! I'll announce it to the clan and then at the gathering at the end of this moon."

Rainwhisker nodded looking towards his apprentice, "good job on

finding it. You too Beepaw, the clan will be excited to have you two as warriors."
Applepaw looked over at Beepaw, who looked over to him and then looked down to his paws with an awkward flick of his ear.

Reedpaw and Spikepaw walked over to the duo, "come on, after the announcement, I heard our mentors will take us out to do some hunting practice!"
Beepaw looked up, wearing a shy smile, "Alright, let's go then!"

Applepaw blinked, clearly surprised. Beepaw acted like he had never told the secret! *'He's good at hiding his emotions. I hope he'll be happy in ThunderClan.'*

Applepaw followed the small group and walked into the RiverClan camp entrance to be met with Birchstar sitting on highstones, Sloefur seated at the base.
"Over here Applepaw!" Applepaw looked over, Rainwhisker had flicked his tail, beckoning his apprentice to come sit.
Applepaw walked over and sat next to his mentor. Applepaw twitched his little tail uncomfortably.
He felt as if eyes were staring, *digging* into his pelt. I fought the urge to look around but the urge won and he turned his head.

Trying to look like he heard something, he noticed the same group of she-cats looking at, or towards Rainwhisker, and they were... *glaring?*
Applepaw looked over at Rainwhisker, the tan apprentice instantly noticed Rainwhisker next to a young looking she-cat. It took him a moment to realize that it was Petalfoot, a very pale brown she-cat with white paws.

'That's the she-cat Frostfoot was arguing with Harethroat about!'
Applepaw gulped, looking around the clearing to find his friends.

'Now I wish I got some other cat to be my mentor. .'

...

2813 Words.

N/A: if I have any spelling errors-- sue me.

OKAY bye my peeps , creeps , and sickly sweets and we'll meet again, in the next chapter!!

Chapter 6》A First Battle Threat

Applepaw was nudged awake, stirring quietly he blinked awake. Letting out a frightened gasp as the pale blue eyes of Reedpaw stared at him, a wide, toothy grin spread in her face.

"Good morning sleepyhead!" The ginger tabby she-cat purred. Applepaw curled up into a tighter ball.

"Can't I just sleep in??" He mumbled, his ear flicking. Icepaw, Rainwhisker son, snorted from across the den.
"Just wake up, you lazy dormouse! With my father as your mentor, he'll want you up bright and early!"

Applepaw uncurled, an annoyed expression clear on his face. *'Of course Icepaw's here... And not out with Sandstripe...'*
As if Reedpaw could read his thoughts she looked over at Icepaw, tilting her head slightly to the side. "Shouldn't you be out with your mentor?"

Icepaw gave a deep, dramatic sigh, rolling over on his back, one of his white paws resting on his forehead. His tail twitched. "Nope."
Reedpaw and Applepaw shared a confused glance.
"Well, actually yes. But Sandstripe went on patrol with my sister, Dawnpaw. Birdpaw and Silverfern tagged along, and *I* was still asleep when they left. So they didn't bother waking lil ol me."

Applepaw tilted his head, clearly confused about Icepaw's choice of wording. "They how'd you know all of them left while you where asleep?"
Icepaw smirked, mischief twinkled in his golden orbs. "It's very, very simple really." He purred, sitting up. "I just wasn't asleep. I was just pretending so Dawnpaw didn't wake me up. I need my beauty sleep after all~"

Applepaw gagged, *'he's so...so stupid! Beauty sleep? Hah! He needs*

way more that beauty sleep... he uglier than a badger... Acts like one too.'

Icepaw hauled himself to his paws, another loud, very fake dramatic sigh escaped his lips. The older apprentice twitched his whiskers, looking over his shoulder he looked at the newly made apprentices.
"Now if you excuse me, I need to go and act like I just woke up. You little kitfish are annoying me." Applepaw watched Icepaw pad out of the apprentices den with a flick of his tail.

Applepaw bristled, his pale holly-green eyes narrowed as he held his glare on Icepaw. "Sometimes he gets under my fur!" The young tom quietly hissed.
He felt Reedpaw press into him in a comforting manner. "Don't get to riled up about it, Applepaw! I bet he'll trip into a pile of fox-dung while out of patrol today!"
Applepaw snorted as he imaged Icepaw freaking out, wailing that his perfect snow-white pelt was ruined.
'We're annoying you? You act like a eel.'

Applepaw rose to his paws, his sleepiness evaporatkng. "Let's go find out mentors. Maybe we'll go and learn some battle moves!" He hesitated to say *'and beat those ThunderClan scum!'* as the image of a crying Maplekit flashed in his head.
He forced down the threat twitched his whiskers, Reedpaw gave a bright smile and Applepaw returned it.
His eyes flicked to looks out towards the busy clearing. Maybe he'd see her at a gathering? The pretty calico molly *would* probably be an apprentice by now so maybe he could see how she was doing...

The way his parents and older warriors gossiped about it like they were elders made him wonder about it. *'Is it as fun as every-cat says it is?'*
He remembered when he was a kit and one of the elders told him about a time when a few ShadowClan warriors started a fight with some ThunderClan warriors. Apparently the gathering had to be cut short because the sky was covered by dark clouds.

Applepaw shuddered at the thought of a dark clearing, being surrounded by cats from other clans he didn't know well. The

thought made his stomach rumble and churn in nervousness.

"Applepaw! Come on!"

The apprentices ears perked up at his name being yelled from across the clearing. He recognized it as Rainwhisker and he immediately ran out of the apprentices den, forgetting to say goodbye to Reedpaw.
He saw Rainwhisker sitting next to Foxclaw and Rippleheart by the fresh-kill pile.

"Sorry Rainwhisker! You called me?"

Rainwhisker licked the fish blood off of his lips, a fat perch sat at his paws, half devoured. "You're late." He repeated, mid-chew. His long tail flicking in such a way that the sandy-brown tom was confused that he had lashed it.
The apprentice nervously blinked. His pale green eyes flickering around the clearing. *'The dawn patrol just left!'* He thought, looking back at Rainwhisker.
"

If you aren't awake and out of that den before my son, then we have a problem. And we'll be fixing it soon."
Foxclaw chuckled at the statement. "Icepaw wakes up rather early, Rainwhisker."
"Exactly. I had my last two apprentices on the same very same schedule. I had both of them walking up early, sometimes even before dawn. They both turned into fine, lovely she-cats."
Rippleheart and Foxtail shared a look before continuing to eat the fish at their paws. Not commenting on what their denmate had said.

The tall white tomcat was sitting up now, licking his paw and swiping it over his ears. "Alright." His mentor began, "we'll go by the river. I'll teach you some tricks that *my* mentor taught me to do when I was your age."

Applepaw immediately felt excited, flicking his ear to tell his mentor he was still listening. What did his mentor teach him and what would Rainwhisker teach him in return?
Would they hide in a tree to catch water voles? Or would they sit by the stepping stones and catch fat fish for the clan? ...Or would he

teach him how flirt with the she-cats?

Rainwhisker rose to his paws and began to walk towards the camp entrance, his muscles rippling through his sleek, short pale fur. Applepaw quickened his pace, now trotting beside him. He lifted high, trying to match the confident stride Rainwhisker had.
"What are we going to learn?" He mewed, buzzing with excitement as they pushed through the camp entrance. The smell of Dawn Patrol fresh in the air.
"Are we going to catch prey? Oh! Battle training in the water?" The thought of being taught a tough move made his paws tingle. He wanted and *was* going to be the best apprentice RiverClan's even had!
Rainwhisker said nothing, still walking carefully by the riverbanks edge.

"Hm... If we did go battle training, what move would you teach me first?" He questioned, his small tail waving from side to side.
Rainwhisker still said nothing. Maybe he wanted Applepaw to keep guessing? Applepaw paused, what battle moves did he know? "What about a leap-and-hold!" Darkshadow had showed that off to Applepaw when he was still a kit!
Rainwhisker's long whiskers twitched, still staring straight ahead.

The small tan tom huffed, when was Rainwhisker going to say something? Was he not even on the right topic? Were they going hunting instead??

Rainwhisker's ears perked and his crouched low, "get down." The icy-white tom hissed, his head lifting ever to slightly to see Sunning Rocks in the distance. Applepaw got down, obeying his mentor's orders. Applepaw gazed through the tall dark reeds, the sound waves slapping against the stones that lined the river bank. Applepaw squinted, confused. What were they looking at?

"Look at them." Rainwhisker growled, his lip curling as his eyes narrowed into slits. "Those fat, squirrel-faced, mouse-eaters."
Applepaw tilted his head, looking over at his mentor with a puzzled glare.
'Who was he talking about?' He thought. *'Surely it wasn't any RiverClan cat we know...'*

"Applepaw look, see that calico she-cat with that grey speckled tom. They're patrolling their border on *our* rocks."

Applepaw shifted closer, lifting his head higher. His pale green eyes widened in horror when he saw Maplekit- or well, maybe Maple*paw* now.

She was gazing around, anxiety filling her round amber eyes. She stood close to her supposed mentor.

Suddenly a tall, golden-brown spotted she-cat burst from the greenery, her head was lifted high as she trotted over towards Maplepaw, a dark brown -almost black- tom following close behind. Applepaw stared with his mouth a gap. His eyes lingering on the almost black apprentice.

Before long two other ThunderClan warrior appeared from the bushes. A light brown she-cat, and a muscular dark ginger tom. Applepaw noticed a white shape on his head, he looked closer, eyes narrowing. He gasped.

'*A star! That dark ginger tom must be ThunderClan's leader!'*

Rainwhisker snarled, "the red tom is Redstar, ThunderClan's leader. Beside him is Fallowsong and the speckled tom father ahead is Bloomheart... I don't know who those apprentices are. Just more ThunderClan cats to defeat to regain Sunning Rocks. Nothing but obstacles."

Applepaw crawled back, looking down at the ground. Stomach churning.

He shouldn't be feeling like this. I mean, these are a rival clans warriors! He'll have to face them in battle one day! Fight tooth and claw over... something important he assumed. He shouldn't be feeling guilty for something he didn't cause.
He looked back up, Maplepaw was glancing over at RiverClan's side of the border, looking around at something or *for* someone.

Applepaw wanted to stand up, show her that he was there, but he also knew that doing that might get himself in trouble with Rainwhisker.

The snow colored tom looked over at his apprentice, ear flicking. "Let's get out of here before the nauseating stench of ThunderClan clings to our fur. I'll have you do some chores back in camp." With that he stood up and raced away.
Applepaw stood up, still looking over at the ThunderClan patrol.

Maplepaw looked at him, he looked back, their eyes locking together. Her deep, amber eyes meeting his pale, holly green ones. She smiled and then turned and walked away when the speckled tom padded off, leading the patrol away. Applepaw hesitated, watching the patrol leave before he flinched as Rainwhisker yowled his name and scampered after his mentor.

He raced past a clump of reeds, the river running beside him. He slowed to the trot when he noticed Rainwhisker waiting impatiently for him, slim silver striped tail lashing.
"Took you long enough," he sniffed, "now come on. Your gonna clean out the nursery. Ebonystream was complaining about not having enough braken and moss to hold her bed together."

Applepaw sighed, ear flicking. "Alright." He meowed, padding into camp in front of his mentor.

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"Thank you, Applepaw." The black tabby queen let out a relieved sigh, shuffling in her new nest. Applepaw nodded, looking down at the queen's swollen belly before looking back up at the queen.
Her kits weren't due for another moon, though it looked like they were due any moment. Apprently she was having at least two kits.

"I'm sure Fogtail is excited to be a father." He purred, trying to be nice.
Ebonystream stretched her white hind-leg, nodding her head as her maw opened in a big yawn. "Oh yes." The black tabby meowed, shaking her fur out. "*Very* excited."

The pale brown flicked his ear, she didn't sound too enthusiastic about it.

"Aren't you happy?" He blurted out. She sighed, resting her head on

her paws. "Of course I am!" She meowed, "I've always wanted to be a mother, and raise kits.. but I would appreciate it a bit more if Fogtail visited more often."
She shook her head, "if doesn't matter anyways. I shouldn't be telling this to you, go talk to your fellow apprentices and enjoy your training."
She purred, yellow eyes round. Applepaw nodded, getting to his paws and leaving the milky warm nursery.

"Applepaw! Patrol! Now!"

' Again? Well, I guess this morning wasn't really a patrol. I spent a lot of time in the nursery, it's sun-high now.'

He twitching his tail, looking over at Rainwhisker who was waiting with his father, Creeknose, Fogtail, Shellskip and—

"Hey Reedpaw!" He greeted, Reedpaw spun around at the sound of her name, smiling brightly at the sound of his voice.

"Applepaw! Hi! How's your day going? Anything fun happen?"

He shook his fur out, shrugging. "It's alright." He meowed, "I had to clean out the nursery by myself."

Reedpaw titled her head, blue eyes round. "You could've asked me to help! I would've loved to help!"

Rainwhisker scoffed, overhearing their conversation. "A real warrior doesn't need help for simple tasks." Creeknose shot the snow-white tom a glare but didn't mutter a word.

"So where are we going?" Reedpaw chirped, walking close beside him, their pawsteps in sync as they left camp. Shellskip flicked his tail, "ask Rainwhisker."
Reedpaw turned towards him, he hesitated before piping up. "Where are going?" He repeated Reedpaw's question with uncertainty.
"I'm glad you asked!" His mentor purred, "we're going to mark Sunning Rocks. ThunderClan seems to think it's all fun and games to just come across the river and rest their fat heads on *our* rocks."
Fogtail lashed his white tail. "They don't seem to remember that those rocks belong to us now."
Creeknose nodded, "Yes. And hopefully we won't need to use out

claws the show them that either."

Reedpaw and him shared a glance, would they really have to fight over some dumb boulders? Why couldn't they just share them?

As the RiverClan patrol approached the large rocks, pelts from across the river were moving. Rainwhisker growled, speeding up and crossed the thick ice that covered the top of the river. Rainwhisker then jumped onto the highest rock, glaring at the ThunderClan cats who emerged from the shady forest.
"Oakfur, Seedpelt, Wildflight." His spat their names as if they were all crow-food. "Remember these rocks are *ours*."
Shellskip, Creeknose and Fogtail leapt up to join their clanmate, flexing their muscles.

"Should we join them?" Reedpaw whispered, he looked over at her before looking back up at the rocks. He really didn't think he could make it in a single leap, but the ice was starting to make his paws go numb.

"I think so." He responded, with that he crouched low and leapt as high as he could, his hind-legs scrambling on the cold stone before he found his footing and padded over to be beside his father.
After a few quick heartbeats, Reedpaw hurriedly joined him at his side. Their pelts brushing together, but he shuffled away and closer to his dad.

"Rainwhisker." The gray she-cat meowed, tail lashing. "We will get those rocks back. They belong to ThunderClan."
Rainwhisker scoffed, chin raising high as he glared. "You and what army? We outnumber you."
Oakfur smirked, "are you certain?"
"Yes. I would re-think those words, Rainwhisker." The large white she-cat with heavy ginger patches meowed, taking a challenging step forward. Her long white tail swaying elegantly behind her.

Rainwhisker growled, neck fur bristling. Turning into sharp spikes at the sound of the challenge in the ThunderClan Warriors' voices.

Applepaw looked up at his father, Creeknose stared at the rival clan warriors, icy blue eyes narrowed into icy blue slits. He nervously

copied his father, flexing his claws.
'But I don't know any battle moves beside the leap-and-hold! And even that I didn't master!' He felt more nervous than before, he felt as if a whole colony of small, fire ants were dancing in his fur, making his nose warm.

"Because, I'm certain we outnumber ***you.***" The white and ginger she-cat let out a low purr, her voice as smooth as honey.

With that, many pairs of ThunderClan warriors emerged from the white, snow-covered forest. Their eyes were narrowed into glowing, battle-hungry slits. Tails lashing and sharp claws glimmering in the sparse sunlight. They had sick grins on their faces as they approached the large rocks.

"Applepaw, Reedpaw, run back to camp and try to get ask many warriors as you can. This is going to be a battle and we'll need all the help we can get..." Creeknose hissed quietly, his eyes landing on Applepaw.
Reedpaw didn't have to be told twice as she's spun around and jumped off the rock, pelting away towards camp. Applepaw nodded and followed suit, running until his legs were sore.

By the time he reached camp warriors were coming out of their dens, Sloefur padding over towards Reedpaw as she sat panting, Frostfoot comforting her kit.

"A battle!" He yowled, his flanks heaving. "There going to be a battle! And it's going to be over Sunning Rocks!"

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Words 2755

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N/A: I'm so sorry this took so long to come out. Shit is crazy irl rn. My house burned down and shit, plus the wifi's wack asf. Im fr using my public libraries wifi-

Anyways, to make up for my hella long hiatus, I gift you with a

semi extra long chapter of Appledusk's Chance and a cliff hanger! I'm sorry again!

**But, goodbye my peeps , creeps , and sickly sweets and hopefully we'll meet again, in the next chapter. **

Chapter 7》The First Battle and Secrets Revealed

[image]

Applepaw panted as Sloefur looked up with wide, amber-yellow eyes. *"A battle over Sunning Rocks?"* The black she-cat hissed, her tail bristling.

Applepaw nodded frantically. Swaying on his paws a bit, his head dizzy. Russetstorm raced over, he leaned against his mother. "Dad's with them." He whimpered, suddenly feeling small.

Russetstorm curled her tail around her son, looking over at the RiverClan deputy. "Sloefur, who are you sending out? My mate could be fighting to the death right now!"

Sloefur whisked her fluffy tail, looking over at the warrior surrounding them all in a ragged circle. Many of them still walking out into the clearing out of the Warriors' Den.
"Foxclaw, Rippleheart, Honeytail, Silverfern, Darkshadow, and Milkfur. Go, *now*." The warriors nodded and raced out of camp, Icepaw approached. Chin raised.
"How come I can't go and fight?" He meowed, tail lashing. "My dad's out there!"

Sloefur looked over at the white tom, he was almost her height. "Sandstripe, do you think he's ready?"
Sandstripe took a step forward, nodding. "Yes, I'm certain."
Birdpaw padded out from beside Petalfoot. "Can I join? I know you already sent out more then half the warriors but—"
Sloefur nosed towards the entrance. "You three hurry to join the battle patrol."

Birdpaw blinked before nodding. The sandy-grey tabby flicked her tail on her apprentices flank before nodding the the black molly approaching and the trio of cats hared out of the camp, Applepaw

watched with wide eyes.
Russetstorm licked her kit between the ears, "they'll be fine." She whispered, nosing his quivering ear with her soft pink nose.

Beepaw bounded over towards him, amber eyes round. "Where they huge? The ThunderClan warriors?" Applepaw looked up, Beepaw's dark amber gaze was round with concern.

The pale brown blinked, suddenly remembering how Beepaw wanted to change clans. ThunderClan, specifically. He hesitated before nodding,
"We saw three ThunderClan warriors before more came from the bushes." A small crowd formed. "A grey she-cat, a white she-cat with... large ginger patches, and a large scarred red tom. I forget their names. Rainwhisker said them."

Shadeeyes, from his spot peering outside the fallen tree where he slept, growled. Golden eyes sliding into slits. "Oakfur." He snarled. His claws flexing in and out.
"Redstar sent Oakfur, Seedpelt, and Wildflight. Three of his best fighters." Mintface meowed, her tail twitching.
"Wildflight." A sleek tabby, Mudbelly, hissed. "That mange-pelted, fox-heart gave me the scars on my shoulder," he flexed his shoulders, as if making sure every cat saw his long, deep scars. "When I was just an apprentice. I hope Fogtail shreds her to nothing but a pile of fur." He hissed.
"Oh, Fogtail..." Ebonystream gasped, curling her tail around her bulging belly.

Russetstorm agreed with a meow. "It's a wonder she had a litter of kits."
Shimmerpelt agreed with a small nod.

"Alright, resume your duties." Birchstar's voice echoed as she leapt onto High Stones, flicking her long tail as she addressed the clan. "But stay alert in case our clanmate return, someone make sure Icewhisker has enough herbs to treat everyone."
Perchwing, a plump spotted tabby rose to his large paws and trotted over towards the medicine cat den, pushing through low hanging, over grown ivy tendrils.

"Do you think dad's going to be okay?" Applepaw whispered, looking up at his mother as she guided him towards the apprentices den, Russetstorm sat him down in his nest. Purring with love.
"You have a big heart, Applepaw." She soothed, sitting beside him. "But there's no need to worry, your father is an amazing fighter. He'll be just fine."
Spikepaw entered the den, though, Applepaw smelt his scent before he even saw him brother's familiar dark grey coat and flashing blue eyes.
Spikepaw padded over, pressing into Russetstorm's shoulder as he settled down in his soft cozy nest.

"Rest, my loves." She murmured, "I promise to awake you both when your father returns."

Applepaw went to protest, anxiety was eating away at him. He wanted to know if his father... if Creeknose was okay! He was probably fighting viciously against a massive tom beside Rainwhisker.

The battle around him a swarm of claws, fur, and blood. He shook the disturbing thought away. He didn't want to think about blood any time soon.

Russetstorm noticed Applepaw looking at her with wide, anxious eyes. Her face softened into a look only a mother could give.

"Rest." She repeated, curling her paws under her chest, curling her feathery soft tail onto his back.

Applepaw nodded laying down and leaning against his mother's warm, tan pelt.

He was suddenly glad to look so much like his mom but have his dad's personality. He was a strong as his father. He was ever so certain of it.

Before he had a chance to start counting fish, swimming in a stream. He had closed his eyes and fell right into the welcoming paws of sleep.

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"CREEKNOSE!"

Applepaw flinched awake, his head lifting off his paws as soon as he heard his father's name being shouted, the shout being yanked away, sounding more distant.

A tan pelt flashed out of the den and he clumsily stumbled to his paws, still feeling sleepy as he got up and out of his nest. His heart racing, his mother's voice echoing in his head. Spikepaw's dark pelt flashed in front of him, also racing out of the Apprentices' den.

Applepaw forcefully blinked away the sleep from his eyes and raced after his littermate.
He saw a crowd of cats, Spikepaw trying to see what was inside the circle as his brother reared up on his hind-legs and fell back down when he couldn't get a good view.
Applepaw sniffed, he could pinpoint his mother's scent from the countless others that mingled with it

He ran over to Spikepaw, tilting his head. "What's wrong?" He asked, flicking his ears, confused.
Spikepaw looked over at him, before looking back over at the crowd of clanmates, shrugging.
"I don't know!" Spikepaw huffed, after a few heartbeats "But they won't move! All I saw was mom running out of the den, screaming dad's name!"
Applepaw nodded, explaining that's why he woke up too.

Suddenly Spikepaw froze, he looked at Applepaw. Right in the eyes. His expression on of fear. Applepaw felt the fur along his spine tingle, raising slightly.
"You don't think..."

Applepaw blinked, taking a kitten-step back. "Think... what?"

He was certain of what his littermate was hinting at but he wanted to hear it from his brother mouth, despite how desperately be also wanted for him to not.

'*Creeknose, he can't be dead! He was just alive! Look as determined as the bravest warrior!'*

The thought sunk deep in his belly, the tan tom shook his head.

Licking his lips as if he ate bad prey.
His chest twisting with such pain that it made him have to sit down, bright green eyes now sullen and dark.

Spikepaw sat down beside him, "What if he died?" He whispered, only loud enough for Applepaw to hear. There it was...
"H-He can't." He whimpered, feeling like a kit. He remembered the night before he went to sleep when him and Beepaw found the messily devoured prey, covered with eye watering fox stench.

°

Creeknose padded towards him, smirking. "Applepaw!" He called out, gaining his attention.
Applepaw stopped, turning to face his father. "Hey, dad." He greeted. "Great work out there." He purred, pressing his nose to his son's forehead. "Rainwhisker said you found that rat near the riverbank. I'm proud of you."

Applepaw felt excitement flash into his body, going to his ears to his quivering tail tip. "Thanks." He mewed, looking down at his paws, a tad embarrassed by the sudden praise.

"I can't wait for you to be a warrior." Creeknose smiled, dipping his head. "Son and father hunting, fighting, patrolling side-by-side. That what I've been wishing of that ever since Russetstorm said she was actually expecting."

Applepaw blinked, watching his father with wide eyes. 'What did he mean by actually *expecting?'*

"You've made me proud, this far, and I can't wait to see what you do when you're older.". With that, he flicked his tail on Applepaw's shoulder and entered the Warriors' Den without a word.

°

Icewhisker's voice broke through his memory. "He's alive! Creeknose is alive!"

Relieved gasps, yowls, and murmuring spread throughout the clan like a positive wildfire. Applepaw stood up, thrusting his way

through the thick crowd of cats.
"Creeknose!" He yelped, when the RiverClan cats heard his yelping, they moved out of the way to let him and his brother through.

Applepaw stumbled, skirting to a halt right beside his father's large, brown body. He looked still but he knew everything was alright by the was Russetstorm was laying right beside him, letting out relieved wailing as she nuzzled into his neck.
Icewhisker had a firm paw on his father's flank, his chin raised.
Applepaw forced his paws to move and with that he curled right beside his father's semi-warm body.
He nuzzled Creeknose's barley noticable rising and falling side.
Spikepaw crawling in right between him and their mother.

He felt a small ripple beneath him and lifted his head, he heard Creeknose moan in pain and then Russetstorm's slightly panicked voice whispering in her mates ears.Applepaw pricked his ears, trying to hear what they where whispering.

"Creeknose, thank StarClan above that you're okay!" She sniffled, letting out a trembling breath.
Creeknose let out a soft chuckle, Applepaw barley noticed it.
Russetstorm's suddenly dropped into a low heartbroken meow.
"I was so scared that our only surviving litter would live without a father..."
Applepaw froze, lifting his head up completely. Spikepaw hadn't seemed to notice their conversation, however, as he was busy whispering something to himself.

Creeknose's husky voice responded, "I'd... I'd never let that h-happen." His voice was strained, he sounded as if he was clinging to life with just his claws.
"Not in a million moons." His voice ended in a wheezing cough.
Russetstorm nuzzled Creeknose's bloody cheek, licking the blood that was forming, letting out a low purr.

"Russetstorm, I need you to get off, you too Spikepaw and Applepaw." Applepaw struggled to his paws, feeling a bit numb.

He and Spikepaw weren't Creeknose's and Russetstorm's first litter?
He backed up as Spikepaw pressed against him mother, Applepaw

watched. Not moving.
For some odd reason, it kind of hurt, knowing he could have had older siblings... but he and Spikepaw were the only ones who lived. It also hurt knowing that he wasn't their first attempt at having a family.

Icewhisker pointed at two warrior from the crowd. "Mudbelly! Perchwing! Help carry Creeknose to my den!"
Both strong toms cast each other a glance before they stood up and padded over, Russetstorm reluctantly got off of her mate but when he was hauled onto both warriors backs, he let out a pained grunt. Russetstorm gasped, "Don't hurt him!" His mother hissed, her tail bushed with fear as she lashed it.
Spikepaw padded back, until finally he was standing beside him.

"Isn't it great that dad isn't dead!" The dark grey toms sighed, his shoulders falling. Applepaw shrugged, his small tail lashing.
"...Yeah"
Spikepaw blue gaze landed on him, stretching wide with surprise. "You don't sound to happy about it..." His brother murmured, flicking his ear uneasily.
Applepaw sighed, "I'm just... Uneased." He half lied. "I'm going to grab something to eat and rest."
With that he stalked towards the fresh-kill pile, grabbed a minnow and entered the Apprentices' Den.

Reedpaw and Beepaw were sitting in their nests, looking over Icepaw who was boasting about how well he fought in the battle over Sunning Rocks, while Birdpaw and Dawnpaw quietly conversed in their nests. They were- or *had* been sharing a perch by the smell of their breath.

Reedpaw looked up immediately as he pushed through the den. "Applepaw!" She gasped, cutting the loud snow-white tom-apprentice off. Icepaw glared at Reedpaw before continuing on boasting.

Reedpaw approached him as he placed his minnow down in his nest as he met her worried blue gaze.
"Applepaw," she repeated more gently. "Are you okay? You seem upset." Applepaw didn't speak for a moment, only looking at her

through narrowed eyes.

"I'm fine." He snapped.
He pretended not to notice the surprise that flashed across her face.

The den grew eerily quiet, all the apprentices turned to look at him. Even Icepaw, chattering like a starling, was as quiet as a Leaf-bare night.
Applepaw looked down at his messy nest, he'd needed to fix that tomorrow morning, "I'm fine." He said more calmly than before, but annoyance was still clear by the tone of his voice.

"Just tired." He meowed flatly.

Reedpaw watched, looking hurt, as Applepaw curled in his nest and force down the minnow. He wasn't hungry. Not anymore, at least, but he knew he needed to eat.
Applepaw curled into a ball, placing his paws over his muzzle. He let out a quiet sigh, he counted minnows until he fell back asleep. One thought following him into dreamland...

' What... What would my siblings look like...? '

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2369 (nice) words.

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WOOOOOOO - boy howdy I really hoped you guys enjoyed this. I tried to make it extra long for you guys, to make up for not posting recently. Sorry abt that btw.

I fr was planning on making this much- MUCH shorter. I was gonna end off on a cliffhanger with Creeknose just showing up, seemingly dead but my hands and brain had other plans lmao. Also happy pride. I'll in introduce some LGBT characters full on later I'm the storyline.

Well...
Reedpaw is CANONICALLY pansexual in this fanfic. There's that ig- make fan art if you want. I already drew fan art lmao.
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Anywayssss – so, yeah. Wifi is still ass so, sorry. I wrote this on Sunday, June 27th. Finished it at 9:44 pm and started at... Around 11 something am earlier this morning :T

Anywho, goodbye my peeps , creeps , and sickly sweets and hopefully we'll meet again, in the next chapter.

EDIT:

Here's (old) fanart !

Chapter 8》A quarrel and visiting Creeknose

It had been almost a whole quarter moon since the Battle Over Sunning Rocks. Everytime Applepaw passed the large sun-warm stones, ThunderClan cats seemed to be *always* basking on them. Mocking the patrol as they passed by. It made his fur prickle.
He hadn't seen Maplepaw yet, sunning herself on the rocks, something deep inside was making him glad he hadn't though he couldn't figure out why. It was just some odd feeling he had.

Applepaw could now fully understand why all of his clanmates detested the mole-faced, mouse-brained warriors on the over side of the river.

Applepaw took a bite of the squirrel, it wasn't his catch it was actually Beepaw's. The dark tabby brought it home proudly. Frostfoot had purred lously, pride swelling through the former queen as she praised her kit.
After it sitting on top of the pile for a little while, Applepaw grabbed it and began to eat. Beepaw noticed and rather shyly asked if they could share it together, so now, he was sharing it *with* Beepaw.
Applepaw wasn't as used to the warm, furry squirrel as he was with the cool, scaley fish he usually ate, and he didn't like the taste of the squirrel either. But he wouldn't dare tell that to Beepaw. Not after how happy he looked when he had brought it back to camp.

He had woken up at sunrise, his schedule have had changed drastically over the quarter-moon of intense training from Rainwhisker.

His mind wandered to when the first snowfall of the season happened, he remembered how chilling the snow was as he and Spikekit played around in it. It was also the day he and all his

denmates, plus Darkshadow and Milkfur, all became very important parts of the clan. He also had his first taste of mouse.
He took another awkward bite of the squirrel, forcing a purr as Beepaw looked at with a happy grin. He returned it halfheartedly, swallowing hard. Trying to get the taste out of his mouth.

It was weird.
He loved the taste of the mouse but squirrel? He nudged the furry prey away, watching as Beepaw ripped into the squirrel hungrily.

He looked away, scanning the clan. The air was still slightly chilly but, Leaf-bare was leaving just as quickly as it came. Which was a bit surprising, as only a few days ago another snowfall had taken place, covering the entire camp in a cold, powdery white blanket of snow. He remembered how a large clump of snow fell right onto the back of Icepaw's neck yesterday morning. Now, the snow was just melting away. Now just slush and puddles that surrounded the camp and territory.

Icewhisker was padding towards the nursery, tangy leaves clamped in his jaw as he trotted swiftly past Darkshadow and Milkfur; the two young warriors chatting quietly but looking happy.
Milkfur then suddenly stood up and demonstrated a move, Darkshadow purred and pushed her denmate over with a shove. Milkfur fell over, looking up with a playful hiss before scrambling to her small paws and cuffing the tall black she-cat around the ears. Before long the two molly's trotted out of the camp, laughing and purring together.
Foxclaw and Harethroat sat in a corner of camp, talking in hushed mews. Foxclaw chuckled at something Harethroat had said while Harethroat rolled his eyes, his whiskers twitching with amusement.
Rippleheart stood near the exit of camp, preparing to lead a patrol out of camp with Petalfoot, Silverfern, Birdpaw and Dawnpaw. Sloefur flicked her tail in greeting to Applepaw and Beepaw before entering the Warriors' Den.
Icewhisker padded out of the nursery, speaking over his shoulder before he padded across the sandy camp clearing, and disappeared back into his den.

Ebonystream stumbled slightly out of the nursery, smiling half-

heartedly before looking around camp. When she couldn't find whatever she was looking for, she went back into the nursery. Her face falling.

Applepaw dipped his head, looking away from the camp and the things going on in it. The dark tabby pushed the squirrel back towards him, the tan tom stared at the squirrel before politely shaking his head in a silent *'no.'*

Applepaw licked his lips, getting off any squirrel blood or fur that clung to his cheeks. Beepaw shrugged and gratefully took a bite of the squirrel, his tail tip quivering in delight.

"It tastes of the oak wood forest..." The dark brown tabby mewed mid-chew, taking a second to swallow.
The tan tom looked over, blinking slowly. "You like the squirrel?"
Beepaw purred, nodding excitedly. "It tastes just as I imagined it would... No, even better than that."
Applepaw twitched his ear, forcing himself to nod. *'I guess he's preparing for when he leaves...'* he frowned at the thought.

Beepaw and him have been friends since they were kits, he almost counted the dark tabby as a second brother.

He sighed, slowly turning to look at his friend. "Aren't you going to miss us?" He whispered, his eyes scanning Beepaw's face.
Beepaw looked over, his long whiskers twitching. His amber eyes narrowing into a look of sorrow and guilt.

"Of course I will. But ever since I was a kit, I've never wanted to swim or hunt fish. I've felt..." Beepaw paused, looking down at the scrap of squirrel that lay at his paws. He suddenly looked away, pushing the furry piece of prey away. After a few heartbeats, Beepaw spoke again. This time, his voice shaking.

"...Like I never belonged."

Then his tone changed, this still determined and confident as ever. He looked up, before over at Applepaw.
"But that'll change when I'm in ThunderClan." He puffed out his chest, amber eyes brightening at the thought.

"It'll be so strange because I won't see you, or Spikepaw, or my mom... or Reedpaw. But I-I just know I'll be happier." Beepaw paused, "I hope that wasn't rude. I didn't mean it like that."

Applepaw smiled, dipping his head respectfully. "Not at all. But, you better be prepared to fall victim to my powerful, strong moves." He growled playfully, leaping to his paws and pushing Beepaw over. Just like Darkshadow did to Milkfur, he chuckled at the thought.

Beepaw gasped, blinking surprised before smirking smugly. "Oh yeah?"
"I bet two whole pikes on it." Applepaw growled, his stubby tail flicking behind him. Beepaw slipped sideways, pushing him over and racing away.

'*Oh. It's on.'* Applepaw thought, getting to his paws and shaking his short fur out.

"I'll get you for that!" He meowed, racing after him. He jumped, aiming for Beepaw's shoulders. Beepaw yelped as he was knocked over and pinned to the ground.
Applepaw playfully growled, Beepaw huffed before kicking upward. Applepaw flew back, catching himself but awkwardly landing on his hind-legs. He took a shaky step back before landing on all four of his well needed paws. In that small few second timespan Beepaw cuffed him around the ears and began batting at his whiskers.

"You'll never escape me! ShadowClan scum!" Applepaw chuckled, rearing up on his hind-legs, knocking Beepaw back and began to rain down heavy but also gentle enough blows to the tabby's heads, making sure to not actually injure the warrior apprentice, his best friend.

Beepaw yelped, clearly surprised. Applepaw froze, Beepaw overpowering and pinning him to the ground when Rainwhisker's voice growled across the clearing, echoing into his ears.

"Applepaw! What in StarClan's name are you doing?!"

Beepaw blinked, scrambling off of him and grooming his chest fur,

embarrassed. Applepaw leapt to his paws, twirling mid-air and facing his mentor. Whiskers twitching nervously. Surely he won't get in trouble for *playing*... Right?

Rainwhisker scoffed as he approach his apprentice, his eyes glaring at him. Icy blue eyes feeling like icy claws that grazed his muzzle. "Rainwhisker!" He greeted nervously, his voice sounded squeaky. Like a kit. He felt even more embarrassed by that.

"Applepaw." The snow-white warrior sniffed, scanning him. "What were you just doing?"

Applepaw gulped, stuttering before a jumble of words finally fell into a sentence. "I- uh... Was playing with... B-Beepaw."
Rainwhisker went to go growl something but he was cut off, the voice came in the direction of the Elders' Den. Applepaw instinctively looked over. It was Sunstorm.

"Rainwhisker, don't be so angry at the little minnow for having fun!" The elderly tabby rasped, purring. "I'm certain you know what fun is. Don't forget that you used to prank your denmate when you were his age."
Rainwhisker looked away, lashing his tail. Applepaw blinked gratefully at the former queen, though she might've not been able to see him do it as her eyesight was growing quite poor, she had to retire a few moons early because of it. He was born after she had retired but the clan treated the cherished elders with as much respect as they would a leader.

Rainwhisker glared at the elder, Sunstorm smirked knowing she has won the argument. "Rainwhisker, you know much better than to argue with me."

Beepaw trotted over to his side, leaning over to whisper something in his ear. "Rainwhisker could have fun?" Applepaw stifled the laugh that was burning in his throat.

He had never knew that Rainwhisker played pranks, he never seemed like the type of cat to do that. His father, maybe, but never Rainwhisker. *'Don't judge a tabby by his stripes, I suppose...'*

Rainwhisker just rolled his eyes, his tail lashing with annoyance. "Applepaw, come on. We're going to practice fighting. Sandstripe and Icepaw are already waiting for us in the Training Hollow. Let's hurry."
Applepaw stood up, looking over at Beepaw and whispering a quick farewell as he sped after his mentor. Rainwhisker hadn't even waited up for him at the entrance tunnel.

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"Duck!" Applepaw ducked, obeying Rainwhisker's demanding tone.

Icepaw came running full speed at him. Applepaw hissed, leaping up and wrapping his fore legs around Icepaw's neck and throwing all his weight onto Icepaw. Icepaw staggered sideways, Applepaw flinched away, taking a few paces back as Icepaw's teeth barely nipped thin skin on his ear. The sound of Icepaw's teeth clinking together made the younger apprentice shiver as chill ran down his spine, the hair on his spine bristling.

Icepaw growled as Rainwhisker stood up. Stopping the battle training.
"Icepaw, you should've been able to stop that. You've had more moons of training of my apprentice here. Do better." He growled, then he fixed his gaze on Applepaw. A proud glimmer of hope flashing in his eyes despite his still facial expression.
"Applepaw, you did well." He congratulated.. which was a first.

Icepaw's tail dropped. Looking down at his paws. Applepaw noticed but didn't say anything. He didn't really feel bad for him, he shook his pelt out, lifting his chin. *'If Icepaw had won, he would boasting about his victory.'* He smirked, *'and* I *won.'*
He trotted over to Icepaw "I won." He purred, nudging Icepaw.
Icepaw shot him a nasty glare, Applepaw just rolled his eyes. *'As if that's gonna shut me up'*

"So." He meowed, still looking at Icepaw. "How does it feel to lose to such a young apprentice?"
Icepaw growled, "shut it."
"What? What was that? I'm afraid I couldn't hear you over my

amazing victory."
"Your win wasn't even that good!" Icepaw snapped, "you just got lucky you, fish-brained rat!" Icepaw's voice cracked, making him sound a tad squeaky. The tan tom laughed, it was funny. Seeing Icepaw get all messed up.

His laughing didn't last forever, as Icepaw launched himself at him. The two toms rolling around is a blur of hisses, yowls, fur, and unsheathed claws.
Icepaw landed harsh blows to his eyes. Applepaw yelped as he felt his fur being pulled out. This wasn't the type of fighting he was used to. Though, the only fighting he did was play. If he yelped during a game, his opponent would stop and ask of he was alright. Not this time though. Icepaw snickered, hissing under his breath. Calling him a kit.

Applepaw struggled, trying to defend himself as he was flipped. His back hitting the semi-damp sandy floor. Icepaw put a clawed paw to his head and pushing it into the ground.Applepaw yowled, struggling under Icepaw's surprising weight.
"G-get!" He felt his hind-legs scrabble against the earth, his felt his paw make contact with a a small stone and kicked it away. Applepaw continued to struggle, his heart racing and he could feel it in his throat. Wasn't Rainwhisker or Sandstripe going to help him?

Icepaw bent down, hissing in his ear. "Who's the winner now? *Kit?"*

Suddenly an yowl pierced the air, the thumping of paws quickly following. Icepaw screamed and scrambling off, Applepaw felt the pressure of Icepaw's paw disappear. There was warm spot where the older apprentices paw was, he sniffled at the thought.
Slowly sitting up and shaking his grains of sand from his fur and whiskers, a flash of dark ginger fur flew over head. He followed where the flash disappeared too and was shocked to see Reedpaw, looking fierce but tiny, wrestling around with Icepaw who was twice her size.

She was taking him on well, well aimed blows hitting the pure white toms face and ears. Icepaw let out a startled shriek as he tried to push Reedpaw off but his attempts were fruitless as the dark

ginger she-cat wrestled with him.
Applepaw blinked, watching as Reedpaw leapt off the tom. A scarlet drop trickling down her ear, she shook out her fur.

"Don't mess with him, you dirty, flea-ridden, minnow-heart!"

'Reedpaw's standing up for me!' he felt warm with embarrassment. He didn't need a- a *she-cat* to defend him! He could handle himself just fine! He just had a bit of a slip up...

Icepaw sneered, echoing his thoughts. "Look at that, Applepaw needs a she-cat to defend him! How adorable!"
Applepaw bristled, jumping to his paws and whirling mid-air to look straight at Icepaw. "I don't need anyone to defend me!" He turned back towards Reedpaw, "You don't need to help me! I could've taken him on by myself!"

Reedpaw stared at him, her ear flicking. She had a nick in her ear... Though she seemed rather unbothered by it. "He pinned you to the ground, you were struggling."
"It was just a slip up! I would've been fine on my own!"

Reedpaw narrowed her blue eyes, "so.. you struggling under his paws was just a slip up? Scrabbling your legs *desperately* was just a slip up? Applepaw, be serious. You should be grateful I helped you before you got your hind handed to you."

Applepaw growled, "just leave! I don't need you criticizing or pointing out everything I do wrong!"
Reedpaw rolled her eyes, clearly not taking anything he said seriously. "Well, that's how a warrior learns, by realizing their mistakes and-"
"StarClan, you're so annoying!" Reedpaw gasped, "You're like a thorn in my side!" Of course, deep inside, he knew he never meant the things he said but he truly didn't need Reedpaw reminding him of *every* little mistake. Sure, he made a wrong move and had been struggling, but that was in the past. He knew he would learn from it. He just didn't need Reedpaw to remind him.

Reedpaw looked away, "I was just trying to help..." She mumbled, pushing away a stray pebble away with her paw.

"Well I don't need it. If you excuse me, I need to get back to training." Reedpaw stepped back, watching as he whisked past her and towards Rainwhisker.

Rainwhisker nodded approvingly but there was no warmth within his blue eyes. Applepaw shook out his fur, "So... What are we doing next?" Applepaw meowed.

Sandstripe looked over at Reedpaw before at at her apprentice. "Rainwhisker, continue training Icepaw for me. Will you? I'm going to take Reedpaw hunting." Reedpaw looked up her blue eyes clouded, Rainwhisker scanned the sandy gray tabby.

"Are you certain that's a good idea?"
"What, you can't handle watching another apprentice, that again, your own son?"
"Well, I never said that." Rainwhisker gave his chest fur a few licks.

Sandstripe flicked her tail on Icepaw's shoulders, "behave, will you?" She hissed, walking away before her apprentice could speak. Sandstripe nudged Reedpaw towards the exit of the training hollow, the dark ginger she-cat looked excited, though her round blue eyes were still clouded with saddened expression.
"Can we go towards the stepping stones, into the more shallower water?" Reedpaw meowed, her voice fading away as she bounced excitedly beside the much taller and fitter warrior.
"Is that where Shellskip takes you?"
Reedpaw said something in response but the two she-cats had already disappeared. Their conversation heading with them.

"Icepaw, demonstrate a half-turn bellyrake. Applepaw, watch carefully as he performs it on me, I expect you to be able to copy it perfectly."

•••

Applepaw walked through camp with a proud smile on his face, though his paws ached with each step he took.
Rainwhisker had forced him to copy every move until he had it perfectly.

"Applepaw, good training session. Tomorrow better be just as rewarding after dawn patrol."

Applepaw nodded at his mentor, proud swelling through him that he managed the please his mentor. Walking towards the fresh-kill pile, his stomach growling like a ShadowClan warrior, he turned to see Darkshadow glaring at him from her spot beside Milkfur. The two sharing a plump carp. Applepaw paused, blinking, confused to see such a hostile look from a cat he called his friend.

He cautiously grabbed a small fish from on top the pile and settled down.
"That's Reedpaw's catch." The black she-cat sniffed, her blue-green eyes scanning him.

Applepaw paused, taking another bite. Chewing slowly this time. Had Reedpaw told her older sister about what had happened in the training hollow? Well, she must've based on Darkshadow's tone.
"Cool." He murmured mid-chew.

He needed to think of an excuse to get away, he didn't feel like having this conversation right now- if ever. So him and Reedpaw had a bit of an argument, what about it?
"So, I heard you and Reedpaw had a bit of a situation earlier." Darkshadow meowed, lashing her tail as she licked her lips, free from fish blood.
"I just remembered I promised to see my dad." Applepaw said, standing to his paws and abandoning his food as he crossed the medicine cat clearing and into the den.

Darkshadow called after him in a hiss, "you can't hide forever!"

Pushing though the ivy tendrils that hung limply from the outside of the medicine cat den, he was greeted by the smell of herbs and hushed whispering.
As his eyes got used to the darkness he noticed how wider the den seemed. Maybe he just didn't look around enough when he spent time here when he was a kit?

The den stretched far back, In a small room that was blocked by a small rock wall, he could smell her mother's fresh scent past the

way which he guessed. A ledge, made out of clay and supported by reeds, was the places where many herbs were scattered along the top. Hanging from the ceiling of the den was low hanging roots, on the roots hung leaves and such.

Applepaw blinked, remembering briefly his stay in the medicine cat den and how he would watched Icewhisker put the herbs there and then wait for them to dry as he sorted others herbs.

He wanted to see his father.

Applepaw walked towards the rock wall that somewhat blocked his view, he peeked into it. Heartbroken at the sight.

Russetstorm was curled on top his father's barely moving shape. Her long, feathery tail resting on his scarred, herb smeared flank. He took a hesitant step forward, his paws trembling at every step he took. He was becoming even more scared by his paws shaking. He hated it.
Russetstorm licked Creeknose's check before turning towards Applepaw, eyes dull and tired looking. She look a but skinner, her fur matted and knotted. Hadn't she been caring for herself?

"Applepaw." Her voice sounded dry as she greeted him. Applepaw felt his pelt prick with confusion and fear.
"How is he?" He blurted out, whiskers twitching.
Russetstorm slowly blinked, "he could be doing so much better." She confessed. "I've been praying to StarClan, night and day, to heal his wounds." Applepaw approached, rather hesitantly.
"Icewhisker says give it time but I'm not sure if it will work. It's been almost a half moon and he's still in this *state*."
Applepaw watched his mother curl closer to her mate, his father, and nuzzled into his neck. Her body trembling.

"He's the only one I have left."

Applepaw felt like a burden, he felt helpless. He didn't know what to do. He couldn't just watch, he mother needed comforting but, how do you do that? It would be awkward if he tried to sympathized, he hasn't lost anybody close... *Yet.* But he couldn't reveal Beepaw's secret, every cat would know soon.

Instead of staying to watch, Applepaw told his mother he'd be back with food and walked out of the medicine cat den.
He trotted towards the fresh-kill pile, still faced he grabbed a pike from the fresh-kill pile. He remembered how she mentioned it to Creeknose before he went on a hunting patrol to get her a pike, as that was her favorite.
Darkshadow and Milkfur weren't by the fresh-kill pile and he silently was glad they both weren't. He didn't want to spark another argument with Darkshadow.

Sniffing through the fresh-kill pile he grabbed the silvery-yellow scaled fish. It looked big and so Applepaw grabbed it, knowing that this would make his mother feel better.

Pushing back through the vines, he walked towards the rock wall and without a word, placed the pike down and nudged it towards his mother. Russetstorm looked over, licking her lips. She looked even worse up close.
"Thank you, Applepaw."
He only nodded his head and walked back out again and made a b-line towards the Apprentices' Den. Everything was happening so fast, he couldn't properly focus.

Curling into his nest, grateful to not see any cat beside Birdpaw who was curled in her nest, sleeping peacefully.

'StarClan,' he began, thinking to himself, *'Please, don't let my father die. If this is for something I've done, punish me, not him.'* he sniffled, burying his face deeper into his paws.

' Please.'

...

Edit - 3832 Words.
(03/17/23)

"

Heyyyy so I'm currently at a hotel (again) and so I have wifi! Fun!!

I hope you guys like this chapter! The next one is going to be a bit longer than 3,000 words soooo -

Anywho, until next time my peeps 👾, creeps 🦗, and sickly sweets 🍬 and hopefully we'll meet again, in the next chapter! 🤍🤍

Chapter 9》Maplepaw

Applepaw watched the medicine cat entrance for a little while from in his warm moss nest. Knowing that the morning would soon arrive.
After discovering that Russetstorm hadn't been taking care of herself, and that his father was still in critical condition a quarter moon ago; he was struggling with sleep.

He had tried counting minnows in a stream, getting up to grab food, training extra hard so he would be even more tired and just collapse into his nest, but nothing worked.
Applepaw was growing desperate, he had told Spikepaw about what he saw but Spikepaw was still resting better than he was.

The sandy-brown tom sat up in his nest once he saw the dark blue sky turn even the slightest shade of scarlet morning. He leapt to his paws and peaked outside, he was the only one awake right now. The apprentice tip-toed towards the fresh-kill pile, sniffing through it to find some breakfast.

It had become routine to do this, eat as soon as he awoke, because Rainwhisker would get him started on training as soon as his mentor opened his eyes. And he was hoping- no *praying* that tonight, he would sleep soundly for the first time in a week.
The sound of rustling reeds made Applepaw look towards the Warriors' Den. He blinked, surprised, when he saw Sloefur emerge. Sniffling, eyes dull and tired looking. Had the deputy been struggling with falling asleep too?

"Good morning, Sloefur." He meowed politely to the deputy.
Sloefur looked over, eyes stretched wide before they relaxed. Resting on the young apprentice. "Oh, good morning, Applepaw. Sleep well, I assume?"
He nervously chuckled, "yeah."

"I'm sure Rainwhisker will be pleased to hear that. He trains hard, huh?"
Applepaw nodded before finally grabbing a small fish and sat down, eating quickly as Sloefur approached and grabbed two fishes by their tails and walked to the Leader's Den.

After a few more moments of eating in pure solitude, Shimmerpelt and Rippleheart purred as they emerged out of the den, giving a quick greeting to Applepaw as they grabbed some food and began to eat together, sharing the pike that Shimmerpelt had grabbed.
Foxclaw stretched as he came out, licking his lips and blinking tiredly as he walked towards the Dirtplace tunnel, going in, his tail tip disappearing.
Harethroat padded out of the Warriors' Den next, he seemed frustrated as Frostfoot sped walked after him. Slowing to a trot as the strong dark-ginger-and-brown patchy tom huffed. Frostfoot whispered something to him, pressing into him gently. Harethroat shook his head after Frostfoot spoke and muttered something as he walked off. Frostfoot watched before looking down sadly and heading back into the den.
Milkfur yawned, shaking her fur out as she pushed past Frostfoot. Flicking her tail on Frostfoot's brown tabby flank before bounding excitedly towards the fresh-kill pile. Blinking happily at both Rippleheart, Shimmerpelt and Applepaw.

Most of RiverClan was already awake, but where was Rainwhisker?

"Good dawn-morning all!" Milkfur chirped, nosing through the pile. Rippleheart looked up, smirking. "How are you doing, Milkfur?" The gray-blue silver molly meowed.
"As amazing as ever!" Milkfur purred. "I'm actually planning on asking Darkshadow something special today."
Applepaw looked up from the scrap of fish bones, whiskers twitching. A bit confused as Shimmerpelt gasped, her amber eyes round with joy.
A teasing tone sounded to the blue siamese's voice as she spoke, "What, you mean you and her weren't already a couple of lovesick doves?" All three she-cats exploded into a fit of purring laughter.

Applepaw sighed, burying his bones and blinking tiredly at Milkfur as he walked to the Warriors' Den. Where in StarClan's name was

Rainwhisker? Milkfur's voice was growing distant as he poked his head into the den.

"Rainwhisker?" He whispered, a bit impatiently.
Mudbelly lifted his head, yawning as Perchwing stirred from beside him. Mudbelly's tired green eyes flashed in the darkness.
"Applepaw? Rainwhisker left camp ages ago. He wanted to test you or something of that sort." The muscular patchy tabby rested his head back on his paws, mumbling. "Check the training hollow."
With that Mudbelly was back to snoring.
Applepaw muttered a quick thanks to the warrior and sprinted out of waking camp. Knowing he had kept his mentor waiting for a long time.

Applepaw heard Sloefur's mew echoing in the clearing, gathering cats for a patrol. Applepaw yelped as he slipped on a puddle of slush, barely catching himself as he continued to make his way to the training hollow. Smelling Rainwhisker's stale scent in the air. So close, he could see it in the distance. The bramble and vine tangled walls. He slowed to a trot when suddenly—

"Applekit!" An excited mew called.

Applepaw paused, looking over and up at Sunning Rocks to see the awfully familiar tortoiseshell-and-white pelt of... *Maplekit!*

He blinked, green eyes staring up at the wide, sun-warmed stone from across the border. Their eyes met, firey-glowing amber meeting soft forest-green.

"Maplekit?" He whispered to himself before speaking louder to the cat across the river, "Maplekit, is that you?"
Maplekit sat up, purring so loud that Applepaw heard it from where he stood. "I can't believe it's you!" She laughed, fluffy white tail twitching.
Her amber eyes softening.
Applepaw hesitated before looking over at the stepping stones. They were far away so he couldn't leap over to meet the ThunderClan cat anyway. Seeing Maplekit filled him with a thrill.

Applepaw shifted his paws as he looked back at the she-cat,

smiling.
"I'm so glad I'm seeing you again," she meowed loud enough for him to hear as she leapt off the rocks and onto the grass below, landing on her white-and-black paws.. "Ive... always wanted to thank you." Her voice grew low but Applepaw heard her just fine.

"Thank me?" His tail twitched as he saw a stone that was visible from the water. But it was wet and slippery. He'd be a fool to jump on it.
"But- but for what?"
"For comforting me in a time of need. Being there when..." her voice had trailed off and cracked but Applepaw knew exactly what she was talking about.
"Of course." He smiled brightly at her as she reached the border on her side of the river, "I'll always be there for you, Maplekit."
Maplekit looked up, "you promise?"
Applepaw nodded, "promise." He meowed. "Oh and, it's Apple*paw* now. I got my full name."
Maplekit looked up, "Oh, yeah? Me too! Or- erm, not that I'm you- I'm not Applepaw..." She seemed embarrassed.

Applepaw laughed, "I understand. So you're Maplepaw now?" She smiled, shaking her pelt out.

"And proud of it! Maplepaw of ThunderClan!"

Suddenly a low, gruff voice echoed through the trees causing both cats to flinch as they look at the oaks. "Maplepaw!" Applepaw looked at the calico *apprentice*.
"Maplepaw, where'd you go? You need to stop running off "
Maplepaw looked over her shoulder before rolling her eyes. "I gotta go." She meowed sadly.
Applepaw titled his head, "maybe I'll see you at the gathering tonight?" He suggested.

"I hope so.. I'd be sad if you weren't there. I want to talk to you." She shuffled her paws, looking up shyly.
"Bye Applepaw!" She flicked her pretty white tail before padding away, casting one last, long glance at him before disappearing into the ThunderClan forest. Her home.
The RiverClan tom watched her leave, a tingly feeling in his paws

as he watched. His heart racing slightly.

"B-bye..."

•••

Applepaw shook his fur out, huffing as Rainwhisker walked off. He was just scolded by his mentor, apparently he wasn't quick enough with his leap when practicing battle moves and would've had his "side torn to shred!" According to Rainwhisker.
When would they move on the hunting? He didn't just want to be practicing fighting all the time.

Beepaw approached him, "Hey Applepaw..." He meowed. The sand-brown tom looked up at his friend. "Beepaw, hey." He greeted, *'Tonight was the night where he would leave RiverClan forever.'*
"Ready to go to the gathering?" Applepaw meowed, trying to start some sort of innocent small talk.
"I don't know." The dark brown tabby confessed, "I'm finally going to a place where I can be me, but everyone I've ever known and loved is here. I'll have to face you guys in battles and- and..."
Applepaw placed his paw gently on his friends, giving the dark tabby a smile.
"At least you get to be happy and be you, the cat you want to be."

"I just wish I told Reedpaw but I'm scared she'll tell everyone."
"I understand," Applepaw sympathized. Reedpaw was quite the blabber mouth. Like that time when he had snuck some honey from the Medicine Cat den because Spikekit dared him too. Reedkit told Icewhisker about it, and in turn, Russetstorm was informed. He was put in time out for *ages.*

Spikepaw approached, tail flicking. "You alright, Beepaw?" His brother meowed, then he cast a flickering glance at him and then back at the tabby.
"He knows." Beepaw flicked his tail, slipping it out of Applepaw's grasp. "He knows I'm leaving."

Applepaw gasped, looking around before back at Spikepaw. "You knew?"
Spikepaw blinked surprised, "of course I know." His brother hissed,

"but *you* knew? When was that?" Beepaw went between them, looking at Spikepaw.
"I told him first thing. Then, I told you."
Spikepaw nodded, before any tom knew it Reedpaw bounded over, licking Beepaw kindly on the cheek.

"Hey you guys!" She greeted happily.

All three of them froze, slowly turning to look at Reedpaw. She blinked, tilting her head, eyes scanning their faces. "What, do I have something on my face?" She laughed. After a few awkward seconds of just staring at each other, she sighed. "Okay, okay I get it. You're probably talking about tom business. I won't bother you, then.."

She flicked her striped-tail and slowly walked off. The three of them watched as Reedpaw noticed Dawnpaw and Birdpaw sitting outside the Apprentices' Den, yowled their names and raced over and began immediately chattering with them, eyes flashing in greeting.
All of them starting to sound like a flock of chirping starlings.

Applepaw twitched his whiskers and then chuckled. Beepaw snickered, shaking his fur out.
"Tom business?" Spikepaw meowed. "I suppose so." Applepaw hummed. Beepaw went to open his maw speak when suddenly Birchstar's yowl pierced the air.

"All cats old enough to swim, gather beneath the Tall Birch for a clan meeting!" Even though most of RiverClan was already gathered, the meeting call made everyone alert.

"The moon is at its highest, and we have to leave soon. I will now list the cats who will attend."
Applepaw perked his ears up, hoping he would get to go. He had made a promise to Maplepaw and didn't want to break it. He was really looking forward to seeing her at the gathering... But now was time to see!

"Rainwhisker, Mintface, Harethroat, Shellskip, Mudbelly, Silverfern, Applepaw, Beepaw, Reedpaw, Spikepaw, Shadeeyes, Darkshadow and Milkfur." She paused to take a breath,

"Ebonystream, if wish to join, feel free." She nodded at the black tabby queen who just nodded back to her and rose to her paws.
"Perchwing, you will stand guard outside camp, Shimmerpelt you right after him, and Rippleheart you're in charge of camp." The three warriors nodded as Sloefur finished speaking.

The clan had gathered at the clans entrance, Applepaw buzzed with excitement at the thought of seeing his ThunderClan friend. They'd finally be able to catch up and talk without being judged.

•••

1950 Words.

I decided to cut this chapter in half so- slightly stupid, short Applepaw and Maplepaw interaction chapter and then a more interesting, much longer Gathering Chapter next time xoxo (03/24/23)
[EDIT]

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So, before anyone comments on how stupid Applepaw is for being buddy buddy with Maplepaw. That's because he is. /hj

Chapter 10》 The Gathering

Applepaw was in awe at all the different scents, sounds, and sights as he walked into the huge gathering hollow, Spikepaw walking beside him.
He entered the gathering and there seemed to be no tension between any of the clans. A few RiverClan warriors cast glares at a few ThunderClan warriors though none of the rival clan warriors looked back.

He gazed up excitedly at the four large oaks that towered over the many clans, the round, silver moon was bright in the sky as every cats pelt was tinted silver.
Rainwhisker grumbled from behind him as Birchstar flicked her pale tail, telling her clan to walk down the slightly steep slope down to the gathering.

"Of course we're late." The snow-white tom sniffed, "we're *always* be late."

Applepaw leaned into Spikepaw for support as he slid down the slope, his paws scrambling to find a paw hold, and when he made it to the bottom, Spikepaw nudged him with his shoulder. Purring as he teased him about his graceful entrance.
Applepaw rolled his eyes, fur fluffing out in embarrassment. "Whatever you fish-face." He huffed, small tail twitching.

Suddenly a scarred, creamy-brown queen approached Birchstar. Her bright, amber-pink eyes were narrowed in an oddly questionable look though she purred a kind greeting to the RiverClan leader. Her slim tail up and swaying carefully behind her.
"Who's that?" He whispered to Spikepaw, his brother shrugged. Not bothering to look over at him and blinking at the she-cat with the same curiosity.
Rainwhisker padded over, now standing at his side. His long tail flicking behind him though it was low to the ground.

"That's Dawnstar." Rainwhisker meowed, a hint of growl in his voice. "ShadowClan's leader."

Applepaw slowly nodded, *'Dawnstar...'* he scanned her so he would remember what she looked like in case of a battle. He decided to note her round -shredded- ears, sharp face, and bright eyes.
Suddenly a huge, broad-shouldered brown tabby walked over, his yellow eyes where narrowed in an unfriendly glare as his long black lashing behind him.
"Rainwhisker, who's-"
Rainwhisker cut him off with an answer. "Snaketail. ShadowClan's deputy."

Birchstar nodded to the gathered cats, flicking her tail as RiverClan dispersed, breaking off into smaller groups and walking off to talk to other cats. Spikepaw was one of those few cats who walked off.
Applepaw decided to also note some key-features about the ShadowClan deputy. For one, his distinctive black tail would be a start, that was the first thing he noticed anyways. Then it would be Snaketail's underbite and tufted ears- maybe his broad-shoulder too? He looked strong enough to crush a cat just by putting a paw on them.

'And to think he used to be a helpless kit!' he thought, *'maybe he was just born a warrior?'*

"Come on, you can go and sit with the other apprentices. Meet some of the others." Rainwhisker shook his fur out as he padded off and past Snaketail, giving the ShadowClan warrior a curt nod before trotting off. Applepaw hurried after his mentor, Snaketail looked down at him, Applepaw gulped nervously as he looked up at the intimidating warrior.
The dark brown tom's eyes narrowed even more, somehow, and he turned away to join in conversation with his leader and Birchstar.

Applepaw didn't bother to look back as he followed his snowy-furred mentor to a surprisingly large group of apprentices' from all the clans.
They where all chatting, some of them looked old enough to be warriors and others looked like they had just waddled out of the nursery.

Applepaw couldn't judge though as he probably looked like that too.

He licked his chest fur nervously as Rainwhisker stopped a few pawsteps away. Looking over his shoulder at him, "Go on. And don't tell anyone about what's going on in the clan, or they'll learn to much and use it *against* us." He growled quickly and quietly but Applepaw had picked it up.

"O-okay." He nervously approached, whiskers twitching awkwardly. Rainwhisker rolled his eyes and padded off and towards group of other senior warriors.
As soon as Applepaw was close enough, a high pitched voice greeted him, calling his name excitedly.

"Applepaw! You've arrived!"

The sandy-brown tom looked up, blinking surprised to see Maplepaw looking at him with bright flashing eyes, she smiled. Patting an empty spot beside her and a dark tabby. "Come, come! Sit by me, wont you?" She purred, her pretty white tail curling over her white paws.
"Maplepaw, who's this?" An incredibly dark brown tom mewed, blinked nervously at him.
Maplepaw shoved his shoulder gently with a paw, giggling. "Stop worrying, you mouse-brain!"
Applepaw paid no mind to the worrying toms tone and sat beside the surprisingly ...large calico.

Applepaw was surprised when he had to look up at her, Maplepaw just seemed as surprised when she had to look down at him!
"Guess I didn't drink as much milk as you? Huh?" He chuckled, his tail wagging awkwardly.
Maplepaw purred, "I suppose so." She jokingly agreed.

"Y'know what my mentor taught me today?" Applepaw looked over to see another large ThunderClan apprentice, her fur was long and a smokey dark gray color.
"That's Stormpaw," Maplepaw's soothing mew filled his ear, echoing in his mind. "She's quite loud and energetic, but she knows how to fight. I watched her almost beat three warrior during training

before. It was amazing."
Applepaw blinked, *'three warriors?'* he stared at Stormpaw as she boasted and showed off a move that he's never seen before. Something with a leap and a fierce swipe. *'I don't think I could ever do that!'*
He then noticed Reedpaw trotting over, she looked like she had just spent a whole moon grooming herself as she had a sleek, clean pelt. Though it was tinted a slight silver because of the moon.
"Applepaw! Have you seen Beepaw?" Reedpaw's question made him shrug. Where *was* Beepaw?
"I don't know." He replied honestly, "Maybe he's with Mintface?"
Reedpaw shook her head, "No. I already asked her."
Maplepaw tilted her head, "who's this?" Applepaw looked over at Maplepaw and then back at Reedpaw.
"Oh! That's Reedpaw. She's my friend." Maplepaw puffed her chest out. Smiling as she nodded at the dark ginger tabby, "well, any friend of yours is a friend of mine! Hello! I'm Maplepaw!"

Reedpaw blinked, staring at her before hesitatingly nodding. "Oh, uh.. *Hi*, Maplepaw." The calico she-cat scooted over, more room between her and the very dark tabby who seemed a little upset by the growing space between them.
"Why don't you sit beside me? I'm sure this... *Beepaw* will find you eventually! Or I can go help look for him with you?" Maplepaw's kind offer made Applepaw smile softly. *'How kind is she?'*
Reedpaw blinked before she puffed her chest fur out, tail lashing in embarrassment. "I'm good. Thank you." She huffed, "Applepaw. Why don't you help me?"

The sand-brown apprentice hesitated, he noticed Maplepaw looking at him from his peripheral vision. He gulped before shaking his head *'no'*.
"I think I'll stay here with Maplepaw. Spending the whole gathering looked for Beepaw isn't how I wanna spend my first gathering."
Maplepaw smirked, looking up at Reedpaw. Maplepaw's thick, white tail curled till it rested on his shoulders. Applepaw blinked, casting a quick glance at calico molly before back at the dark ginger tabby.
Reedpaw looked at him, her blue eyes flickering to scan his face. Her eyes flashed with betrayal.

'What was up with her?'

"Does she always act like that?" A reddish-brown tom blinked, looking over at Applepaw. "With her tail in a twist?" He smelled like pine and sap.

Applepaw shook his head, ear twitching. "No, no. She probably is just upset that I didn't go with her." He turned his head slightly, Reedpaw was already on the other side of the gathering hollow, Spikepaw was trotting beside her. She turned to look at him before turning back to the dark gray tom.
"She's walking with my brother— his name is Spikepaw– so she should be fine."

The red-brown tom nodded. "Cardinalpaw! Robinpaw! Why don't you sit by me?"
A black tom with amber eyes approached the group of apprentices', his amber eyes round with love for his supposed kits. The reddish-brown tom from before groaned, rolling his dark green eyes. "Come on dad. Me and Robinpaw are 10 moons old. We'll be warriors soon."
The reddish-brown she-cat beside him, who shared her brothers fur color, nodded. Her amber eyes narrowing.
A dark gray tom walked over and nodded towards the black amber-eyed tom. "Cardinalpaw. Come on, go sit beside Blackflame. You too, Robinpaw."

A black-and-white she-cat purred as she approached, a pure black tom and golden-brown she-cat following her. The three smelled of fresh heather and rabbit. "Being pulled away by your dad again, eh, Cardinalpaw?"
"Shut your yap, Patchpaw." The red-brown tom huffed as he reluctantly followed his father and the dark gray tom.
Patchpaw purred loudly, turning towards Maplepaw and him.
"Oh! Newbies! Hey! I'm Patchpaw! This is my brother Cedarpaw and best friend Goldenpaw! Nice to meet you!"

Maplepaw smiled, "Hello! I'm Maplepaw! These are my two friends Frecklepaw and Birchpaw! We're from ThunderClan. Oh! And this is Applepaw, he's from RiverClan." Maplepaw gestured towards every one of them with her tail.

'Birchpaw and Frecklepaw. Huh.'

Patchpaw purred, "I would've already guessed what clans you're all from, but it's nice to know your names."
"And how'd you know what clans we're from?" Maplepaw meowed curiously.
The black-and-white she-cat thought, "well. For starters, ThunderClan smells like oak and rodents. Like squirrel and mouse. It's easy to tell when ThunderClan's around. For RiverClan," she turned her attention on him, "you guys smell like cold river and *fish*. Which isn't the best smell, no offense."

Applepaw twitched his tail, "none taken. WindClan cats are easy to sniff out too. You guys smell like heather and rabbit."
Cedarpaw chuckled, "glad to know we smell good then."

"Swiftstar! You can start the gathering off!" a muscular ginger tom was seated nicely on a high branch, Redstar. He remembered the red tom from Rainwhisker pointing him out after the two had stalked a ThunderClan patrol in the beginning of his apprenticeship.
Birchstar was one the next branch beside Redstar, her pelt sleek looking.
Dawnstar was below Birchstar, looking imitating.
Lastly was a dark gray tabby tom who flicked his tabby striped tail before nodding. Applepaw guessed he was Swiftstar.

"WindClan is proud to announce that Amberpelt's kits, Silverkit and Dewkit, are apprentices. Dewpaw and Silverpaw. Despite their age, this is their first gathering. WindClan has been lucky to not have any greencough this quick leaf-bare and prey has been plentiful."
The clans gave a quick cheer for Dewpaw and Silverpaw.
Applepaw noticed two she-cats sitting besides a old-looking amber colored she-cat with violet eyes. Both young mollies looked bashful as they looked down at their paws.

"Ah, WindClan, you have new apprentices too! Wonderful." Redstar nodded, glancing at Birchstar before looking back.
"ThunderClan is proud to announce that Wildflight and Sweetbriar's kits all have become apprentices. Wildflight's daughter, Maplepaw, and Sweetbriar's kits, Frecklepaw and Birchpaw."
Applepaw paused, looking over at Maplepaw who was puffing out

her chest. Looking proud of herself. The clans cheered the three apprentices names loudly, a few WindClan warriors gave a few halfhearted cheers.

'She's Wildflight's daughter!' Applepaw felt a worm of anxiety squirming in his stomach.
'Why do I feel so... worried?'
Applepaw looked down at his paws, blocking out the rest of Redstar's news. Dawnstar and Birchstar's too.

Only when Maplepaw purred loudly and nudged him was when he was brought to his senses.
"Don't be so shy!" Maplepaw whispered in his ear, "This is your moment to show the clan who you are!"
Applepaw blinked, looking up from his hunched state before he sat up, ear tips now warm from embarrassment. He puffed his chest out, trying to prove he was proud of his name and apprenticeship. For a second, a thought passed through his mind to stop acting all high and proud, that this wasn't him. But he ignored it.

Before long, the gathering ended but the clan leaders had decided to let the clans mingle for a little longer.
Birchstar and Redstar were talking, though they both looked calm, but their bodies where tense. Beepaw was approaching the two leaders, and Applepaw stuttered out a quick goodbye to Maplepaw and raced over to find Spikepaw.

"Oh- okay! Bye Applepaw!" She called before turning to talk to someone else.

He found Spikepaw chatting with Reedpaw. "Spikepaw!" He panted, "follow me!" Spikepaw looked up, blue eyes flashing with confusion. "Applepaw? Wha-"
Applepaw looked over at Reedpaw before looking back at his brother, *"Beepaw."* He hissed out through gritted teeth.
Spikepaw sat up quickly, "Sorry Reedpaw! Tom business!" And leapt up and raced after Applepaw, Applepaw twitched his ear at the confused looking dark ginger tabby she-cat and hared after Spikepaw.

It wasn't long before Spikepaw and him slowed and began to slowly

to near Beepaw. The dark brown tabby seemed nervous as Redstar and Birchstar both turned towards the young tom.

The two brothers neared.

"I-I... I want to erm... J-Jus. Um..." Beepaw was starting to mumble nervously.
Redstar cast a look at Birchstar. "Does he normally act like this?" Even with the stern look he was casting, there was amusement gleaming brightly in his gaze.
Birchstar shook her head, "just give him a moment. You are just an intimidating, arrogant fur-ball." She brushed a slim tail on his flank. "Take your time, Beepaw."
Spikepaw walked over, "hey, Beepaw." He greeted.
"Oh! Yes, Redstar. This is Spikepaw."
Applepaw trotted over, pressing into his friend. "Look at that, and this is his brother, Applepaw!"
Redstar smiled, "Hello, you two. Your friend here was trying to tell us something."
Applepaw forced a smile, nodding kindly to the ThunderClan leader. Birchstar was right though, he looked very intimidating. Beepaw's tail twitched nervously as he took a deep breath.

"B-Birchstar. I-I, I've wanted to say this for the longest time. I..." Spikepaw gave him an approving nod.
"I want to join ThunderClan!" He blurted out, his voice echoed around the gathering hollow. Conversations cut short as cats began to look over.

Applepaw was beginning to suddenly feel nervous, his fur prickling with nervousness. *'Imagine how Beepaw feels!'* he thought.

Birchstar looked shocked, her ears perked up high. Redstar blinked. Looking surprised but calm.
"Beepaw? Are you serious?" Birchstar's voice was surprisingly calm, though curious.

The young tom nodded. "I just... Never felt like I belonged." He whispered guiltily. "I never wanted to swim. I've never liked the taste of fish. I've always felt my paws itching to race through a pretty woodland, hunting with my clanmates with dry paws. I want

to be in ThunderClan." He stated the last part with such certainty. He sounded mature.
Birchstar shared a glance with Redstar. "Beepaw, you're still a young cat. You cannot change clans multiple times, you know this. You took an oath to serve your clan."
Beepaw looked ashamed. Applepaw pressed against him, as did Spikepaw. Was Birchstar going to deny Beepaw to feel happy?
"But," all three tom apprentices looked up. "I can understand where you're coming from. I knew someone just like you once." She purred sadly, as if reminiscing on old memories.
"Beepaw. You have my full permission to change clans. But, you'll need Redstar's permission. He is the leader after all."

Beepaw looked over at the muscular red tom, his eyes round. Applepaw smiled as he looked over at Spikepaw. The two shared a happy glance.

Redstar nodded. "I don't see why not."

Beepaw smiled, tail quivering in delight. "Thank you! Thank you so much!"
Redstar nodded.

Beepaw can finally be happy. But what about his family? What about Reedpaw?

...

2740 Words.
(03/27/23)

~~

4014 words

JEEZ! This took way longer to write than I expected-

Beepaw is now is ThunderClan!

I fr had no idea how to write a *'changing clans'* thing so bare with me 🙏🤲🖐

Anywho, until next time my peeps, creeps, and sickly sweets and hopefully we'll meet again, in the next chapter!

Chapter 11》Comforting

"I still can't believe that Beepaw left." Reedpaw blinked, walking beside Applepaw. Her head hung low, tail dragging behind her. "I always thought we'd become warriors together. I never imagined Beepaw never liked it here."

Applepaw was walking besides Reedpaw on border patrol with Sloefur taking lead, Shellskip beside her, Rainwhisker and Petalfoot walked beside each other. Rainwhisker was talking calmly, voice as smooth as honey as Petalfoot looked flushed, her tail high up as she padded as close as possible next to his mentor.

Applepaw nodded slowly, "I know. but, at least he's happy. Even if it isn't with you."
Reedpaw looked over at him, "I... I guess. But it hurts. Like a phantom pain." her blue eyes, normally bright, were clouded with a dark shadow of pain.
"Imagine if Spikepaw left you. But he was just in another clan, living his best life without you in it. With new people, your enemies now his friends. It hurts *bad*, Applepaw."
Applepaw twitched his ear, he looked down at his paws. The walked slowly to keep pace with Reedpaw.

"I have." He whispered back. *'And I know I can't properly sympathize.'*

The two young apprentices walked together in silence as they neared the WindClan border.
The smell of heather and rabbit unbelievably strong. It reminded him of the gathering a couple days prior.
Rainwhisker looked up, "WindClan." He spat the name like sour prey. Petalfoot nodded from beside him, the pretty tan she-cat stood firmly, looking fierce. "Just let them try anything," she huffed.
Icewhisker looked over at her, smiling kindly.
Sloefur flicked her tail, "we aren't here to attack." She hissed, "we're here to mark the border and then leave."

She pointed her tail at Shellskip, Icewhisker and Applepaw. "You three, mark the border down there, me, Petalfoot, and Reedpaw will mark further ahead."
They broke off in their separate groups and Rainwhisker didn't hesitate to mark. Shellskip did so just as well, Rainwhisker pointed with a white paw at a bush. "Applepaw, mark that."
Applepaw did as he was told when suddenly coming over the hillside was a patrol of WindClan warriors. They raced right up to the patrol.

A creamy white tom was in lead, a white she-cat with silver tabby stripes and amber colored she-cat- *Amberpelt*, he remembered her kits becoming apprentices being announced a few nights ago- behind him. Trailing behind the two she-cats was a strong looking blue tom with long front fangs, and golden brown molly. She looked like she would be an apprentice.

"Hello." The creamy white tom greeted skeptically.
Shellskip greeted the tom with a curt nod, "Greetings, Milkfur."
'Milkfur? But, we have a Milkfur in our clan! Isn't that confusing?'
"What are you doing so close to the border?" Milkfur meowed, his tail twitching. "You aren't thinking of crossing it, are you?"
Rainwhisker snorted, "like we would think about doing that."
Shellskip cast a swift glance at Rainwhisker before looking back at the large WindClan patrol. "No, we were just marking it. I promise we weren't going to cross."
Petalfoot and the rest of her small group returned, Petalfoot padded right up to the Rainwhisker, pressing herself into him.

They shared a few quick whispers, Petalfoot's face looking worried, her round ears twitching. Rainwhisker smirked at her before pulling away from the small tan she-cat, facing the rival clans patrol.

"Milkfur."

"Sloefur."

The two deputies greeted each other with still words. It make his paw pads prickle with unease.

Reedpaw walked close to him, if she moved a whisker length closer,

their pelts would be brushing. He slowly inched away.
"We were just marking the border, I hope we didn't disturb you. I hope hunting has been good for you."
"Yes, it's doing lovely. Thank you. I smelt RiverClan and I wanted to make sure nothing was going on."

Applepaw padded home, he liked the feeling of cool sand and pebble under his paws. It felt soothing to him.
'Beepaw might disagree.'
Applepaw cast a hesitant look over at ThunderClan's border. He smelt and saw nobody over on the other side of the river. Only the stale ThunderClan border scent and the river. He silently wondered who Beepaw's new mentor would be. He hoped it was a nice, patient cat, not a cat like Wildflight.
The rest of the walk home was quiet, well mostly quiet. Rainwhisker and Petalfoot kept whispering to each other, just barely heard over the sound of river. The two were obviously flirting when Petalfoot let out a soft giggle, her tail curling onto her back.

Entering the camp, it was clear something was going on. "What's happening?" Sloefur called out, flicking her tail and letting her patrol disperse.

"Ebonystream has finally gone into labor! It happened a few moments ago!" Perchwing purred loudly from his spot beside the fresh-kill pile and his mate, Mudbelly. The two where sharing a plump carp, it was half devoured, laying between their paws.

"Kits have always been a blessing." Frostfoot murmured, glaring over at Harethroat. The ginger-and-brown tom met her gaze unflinchingly. The two had gotten a bit more hostile with each other ever since Beepaw left the clan.
"Is Fogtail with her?" Applepaw asked, curiously.
He remembered Ebonystream complaining about her mate not visiting her as much as she liked. Though she had cut the conversation short as the black tabby queen had dismissed him. Not wanting to bother him anymore with her personal drama.
Eeltail took a last bite of their food, burying the prey in a small hole they had dug in the sand.
"Fogtail? He left camp, he seemed scared. I just told him to catch

some prey for her, that seemed to calm him down enough."
Silverfern chuckled, emerging out of the warrior den, having had overheard his clanmate's words. "Oh, remember when Ebonystream told him he was going to be a father?"
Foxclaw snorted, laughing loudly at the memory. "He almost fainted!" He snickered, going back to grooming his chest fur.

Fogtail scent suddenly drifted into camp, he stumbled into camp carrying a huge haul. He held two *huge* carps. He panted as he dropped then off by the fresh-kill pile, shaking his fur out and free of water droplets. "I caught a few minnows, if anyone could help me carry them back."
Eeltail laughed, eyes shining bright as they watched their littermate proudly.
Foxclaw stood up from his spot by the warriors den and walked over, head butting his friends side. The russet-colored tabby was smiling wide, "good haul! I'll help you."

Applepaw looked over trying to spot Spikepaw, but the dark gray tom was no where to be seen. He was probably out of the camp training hard. He had been pushing himself hard after Beepaw left.
Reedpaw dragged her tail on his flank, he looked over at where she touched him before looking up, seeing her a pawstep or two in front of him.
"I'm going to see if Shellskip wants me for anything." She padded of to talk to her mentor.

The two were still a little iffy, Applepaw still didn't feel bad. I mean sure, Darkshadow was still giving him silent treatment but what he did wasn't that bad, right? Reedpaw seemed to have forgiven him.

"RiverClan needs more kits." Sunstorm meowed, whiskers twitching as she stretched slightly, her and her denmates basking in the sun by the elders den.
"Oh yes, I miss the little scraps bugging me to tell em' stories." Shadeeyes sighed, eyes twinkling.
"It doesn't feel the same not having kits around, I miss them trying to trip me up while I'm on my way to dirtplace." Mossywhisker agreed with a nod and a mutter, her thick tail curling around her side as she rested her head on her paws.
Kestrelsplash hummed softly, stretching as she stood up, trotted

closer to the nursery.

Kestrelsplash was Ebonystream's mother and two were incredibly close.

"Applepaw! Come along, I'm taking you hunting with me and Reedpaw." Shellskip nodded towards him
'But- didn't Fogtail just return with plenty of food?' Applepaw thought, then a second thought hit him, *'it never hurts to have plenty of food!'* Applepaw padded after Shellskip and Reedpaw, Shellskip nodded at him and exited camp.

"Has Rainwhisker taken you down by the stepping stones before, Applepaw?"
Applepaw paused, before hesitantly shaking his head.
"He doesn't really take me hunting. He only does battle practice and then patrols. I've picked up a little about hunting but not a whole lot."
Shellskip blinked before looking away, "that's odd..." Shellskip sighed, "he always taught hunting first. I wonder what made him change his mind with you." A smile soon crept it way back onto his face and the three neared the stepping stones.

The river was calm.
It was shallow where they stood now, but if you wadded out far enough you could be paddling around like an otter. Applepaw saw the river a clear, a few shiny pebbles at the bottom. *'Russetstorm said she likes shiny things. I could get her a stone. It might make her feel better.'*

His mother had slowly been coming out of the medicine cat den to get food and water. Her pelt looked clean but Creeknose was still...

"Alright, Reedpaw, you know how to hunt. Go off then, I'll show Applepaw the basics." Reedpaw nodded, looking determined as ever as she trotted towards the stepping stones and sat down on a big flat one, getting comfortable, before looking down into the clear water.

"Alright then, come here Applepaw." Applepaw approached Shellskip, sitting down beside the large tom. He tried to sit up

straighter to seem tall.
"First things first, make sure your shadow isn't cast on the water."
Applepaw nodded, he knew that much. He shuffled until he was in a more comfortable position.
Shellskip nodded approvingly, "Alright, fishing isn't as difficult as it seems. It's rather easy, though, I may be bias." He purred.

Applepaw cracked a small smile before slowly looking at the river. He gave a quick look at Reedpaw, the dark ginger she-cat was looking intently at the water, her paw raised slightly with sharp claws exposed.
She looked focused and ready.

He blinked and looked down at his own paws which were planted flat against the sandy river bank. He quickly lifted his paw and extended his claws.
Shellskip purred, "I see you're copying, Reedpaw."
Applepaw shrugged, "I mean, I guess. She knows how to hunt."
Shellskip watched him for a moment before turning back, "alright then, well..."

"You took my apprentice out?" Rainwhisker spoke skeptically, his eyes narrowed as if he was expecting Shellskip to demand something in return.

Shellskip nodded, "yes, I did. I didn't see anything wrong with it? It was just some hunting."
Shellskip and Rainwhisker we're both around the same height, though Shellskip had much broader shoulders and thicker fur. His paws where large and he planted them firmly to the floor. Rainwhisker looked thin compared to the other warrior.

Both toms where well muscled and fit, Rainwhisker was just a bit more slimmer, and less scarred.

Applepaw sadly didn't catch anything but he carried one of the fish Shellskip caught, Reedpaw caught more than the both of them. Applepaw was kinda impressed.
'She's a really good hunter.' He thought as Reedpaw padded past him and towards the fresh kill pile that was stacked high with fish after Fogtail's trip.

"Did he catch anything?"
"No, but he's much better than when he first started. You should probably teach him more hunting, than just fighting." Shellskip suggested softly.
"Are you judging *my* mentoring?" He narrowed his icy blue eyes.
'Why's he so defensive?' the tan apprentice thought, walking away from the two adult tomcats.

'Shellskip's right, we have claws, sure. But hunting is good too.'
Applepaw looked over at the nursery, still thinking. *'we have more cats in the clan, they'll all need to be fed.'*

"Applepaw, feel free to rest." Rainwhisker mewed, approaching him.
"We're... we're gonna join a hunting patrol tomorrow and then I'm going to teach you some more swimming."
Applepaw nodded, feeling excited for tomorrow. "Alright!"
Rainwhisker scanned him before turning away and sitting beside a group of other senior warriors.

Applepaw was quick to walk into the apprentices den, feeling excited for that tomorrow would bring.
Entering the den he was met with Spikepaw sitting alone and staring at Beepaw's empty nest with a longing look. His dark green clouded.

"Spikepaw?" The sandy brown tom meowed softly, padding over.
Spikepaw flinched, looking away from the empty nest looking guilty. "Hi.."
"Are you okay?"
"...I don't know." He seemed to wanna say more but hesitated.
"Is it about Beepaw leaving?" He whispered, standing in front of his littermates nest.
"Yeah.. I mean, I supported Beepaw's decision to leave because it would make him happy, he wasn't happy here in RiverClan. The thought didn't hurt as much then, and I didn't really think how much it'd really.. *affect* me. I want him to find happiness and peace, love and joy. But now?" the dark gray apprentice sighed, "It's costing me mine. He was my best friend and now he's just.. gone."
"He was mine too." Applepaw meowed, sitting down in his nest that was right beside his brother's. His short tail twitching.
"We'll all miss him."

There was a silence that followed before the dark gray apprentice mumbled.
"I just wish I was able to see him. Check on how he's doing."

An idea flashed through his head, his close friendship with Maplepaw. He could try and ask the large tortoiseshell-and-white she-cat to give updates on how Beepaw was doing, how he was adjusting to his new brand new life in ThunderClan.
But he pushed the idea down. Spikepaw might question why he was so close with a *ThunderClan* apprentice. Before he could reply, Reedpaw walked into the den, sniffling and stumbling.

"Reedpaw?" Applepaw gasped.
"Applepaw, Spikepaw- hi.." she wiped her face with a cream paw, clearing her throat despite the tremble in her voice giving it away she was just crying.
"What.. what happened?" He stood up and looked down at his friend.
The dark ginger she-cat went quiet, her lip trembling. Her eyes were glossy and she had a hurt feeling in her eyes.
"Harethroat, he- he told me that I better not turn out to be like a failure or a traitor like Beepaw. He said- said-" she couldn't finish her sentence as she broke out into cry. Pushing her face into Applepaw's chest. Seeking comfort.

Applepaw flinched at the sudden cry. He looked at Spikepaw for help who looked just as confused and concerned.
'I wish I was better at-' the memory of racing out of camp over a moon ago flashed through his head. *'Sunning Rocks! With Maplekit!'*

Applepaw hesitated, before resting his head on Reedpaw's and letting her let it out into his chest fur. He turned slightly so that he could sit down, bringing her down with him. He placed a paw on her shoulder, pulling her kinda closers, and felt as her fluffy tail curled on her side and fluffing up as it brushed against his side.
The dark ginger tabby trembled, her ears falling as she leaned into him. She cried for a little while but it seemed like the longest minutes of his life as he just sat there and took in all the tears.

After a while, Reedpaw pulled her head out from underneath his. Her eyes were a little puffy, but there was a new glint in her blue

eyes that replaced the pain. One that Applepaw was a bit confused by but didn't question. They were all hurting because of Beepaw's departure.

"Are you okay?" Was all he said.

The tabby cracked a tired smile, looking up at him before turning away and looking down as her paws. Her soft pelt had gone warm.
"..Thank you." She ignored his question which made his whiskers twitch with slight annoyance.
"And I'm sorry if I making you feel bad during your training session." She apologized, "I was just trying to help you against Icepaw. I promise. I never meant to embarrass you.. you just-" she stopped herself.

Applepaw blinked. He should probably apologize too. He hurt her feelings. But he didn't really feel bad, she *did* embarrass him in front of his mentor.
A little voice told him to stop being so full of himself. *'I'm being stupid. She's my friend. I don't want to lose another one and I know she doesn't want to lose me either.'*

The sandy-brown apprentice nodded, "it's fine. And I'm sorry too. I shouldn't have yelled at you and made you feel bad. Darkshadow almost tore my ears off."
Reedpaw purred softly, her eyes still reddish and puffy. Though a kind smile turned her lips and he knew his words had made the tabby feel better.
"She's a good sister," Reedpaw mewed. "I'm happy to have her.. even though Beepaw.."

Spikepaw had padded over and touched his dark tail to her shoulder. "Beepaw is safe. That's all that matters. We should all train harder for his sake."
"Yeah. For Beepaw." Applepaw agreed, stepping away from the she-cat. His chest felt wet and he cringed internally at the gross feeling. Reedpaw's tail twitched, as if upset about the loss of Applepaw's warmth. Her tired eyes resting on him before on his brother.

"Beepaw would want us to train to become the best warriors ever!"

"Yeah and then I'd shred his pelt in battle," a voice called from the entrance. There Icepaw stood snickering.
"That tom is nothing but a traitor, leaving his clan for those *squirrel-chasers*! Those killers." He spat.
"Icepaw. Stop." Spikepaw hissed.
"Or what? You're defending the enemy by defending him."
"He's still our friend, Icepaw." Applepaw shuffled past Reedpaw to stand by Spikepaw. Narrowing his eyes. "We aren't going to ignore him just because he's left."
"Right." Icepaw pushed past to his nest. "I always knew something was off with him. It was like he was a rock in a pond full of fish. He never belonged here."

Reedpaw bristled. "Stop talking bad about my brother! I'll hand your hind to you again."

Icepaw's eyes twinkled, looking right at Applepaw. "You still need a she-cat to defend you, Applepaw?"

•••

3069 Words.

Ahaha cliffhanger.
(I can't write comfort wtf)

I kinda rushed the ending because I've had this chapter like half done for a long while and I didn't like where it was going so I had to rewrite a lot of it. Forgot about it. Worked on it again and then decided to fix this entire book up and now we're here again LMFAO
Hopefully it's alright- □